Religion of the Family

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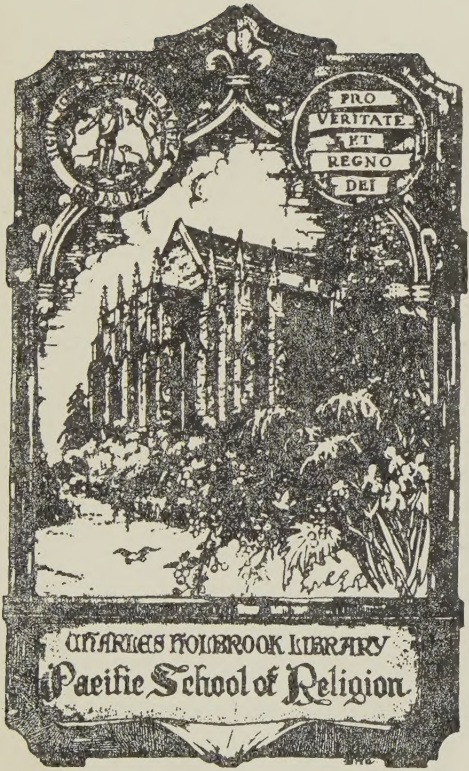
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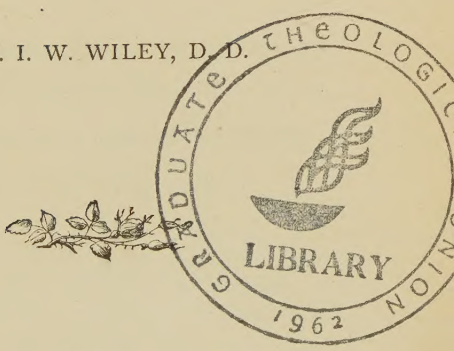
THE

Religion of the Family.

BY

REV. I. W. WILEY, D. D.



CINCINNATI:
HITCHCOCK AND WALDEN.
NEW YORK:
CARLTON AND LANAHAN.
1872.

BV
4526
W543
1872

SD1
W648

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PREFACE.

WE have designated this little volume by the somewhat strange title of "The Religion of the Family," because we wished to indicate that in its pages the family is recognized as a sacred institution, coming from the wise and beneficent appointment of the Creator, and, therefore, subject to such laws as he has attached to it. We believe the family has a deeper significance than merely that of uniting persons of opposite sexes to live together and gather offspring about them, and that it has wider relations than those merely of a social and transient character; that God, its author, has designs and purposes to accomplish by it, both with regard to the welfare of human beings in their social relations, and with regard to his Church and Kingdom on the earth. The successive chapters of the volume are intended to indicate and enforce these sacred relations and purposes, and to bring to

bear, in these times of reckless assertions with regard to the family, the authority of God in behalf of its claims and obligations. We have, therefore, thought this Divine side of marriage and its duties could be well enough indicated under the title we have chosen.

Our thoughts have been directed to people who regard God and respect his Word; people who, after all, will still constitute the preservative element in society, and turn back to the oblivion they deserve, the unwise and unchristian purposes of rash men and women who seem ready to cast aside all authority, and trample all experience beneath their feet. On these last we expect to have but little influence; but if we can confirm and deepen the convictions of wise and good people with regard to the sacredness of marriage, its inviolability, except in accordance with God's law, and of the permanency and moral relations of its claims and obligations, we shall have accomplished our object.

THE AUTHOR.

CINCINNATI, NOV. 1, 1871.

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THE

RELIGION OF THE FAMILY.

I.

THE ORIGIN OF THE FAMILY.

THANKS to the man who wrote the imperishable song, "Home, Sweet Home!" It is an offspring of modern times; it could not have been conceived, or written, or sung in eloquent Greece, in warlike Rome, or in all the effeminate East. It is a Christian anthem, dedicated to the *lares* and *penates* of Christian households. It has trilled on a thousand tongues, and taught ten thousand hearts to feel and appreciate the significance of Home! How deep a spell that little word contains! It is the circle in which our purest, best

affections move and concentrate themselves—"the hive in which, like the industrious bee, youth garners the sweets and memories of life, for age to meditate and feed upon!" It is childhood's temple, and manhood's shrine—the ark of the past and future.

The soldier dreams of it as he sinks to rest on the red field of slaughter, when the fierce fight is done. Let but the bugle of a light regiment play "Home, Sweet Home" far away on the battle plains of the Crimea, and a thousand hearts rise into the throats of brave warriors, and silence creeps into every chatting circle, and many a soldier's head turns aside from the watch-fire to listen to the air that carries the memories back to the far-off firesides they have left behind.

There are few passages in classical literature more beautiful or affecting than that where Xenophon, in his Anabasis, relates the effect produced on the remnant of the ten thousand Greeks, when, after passing through dangers without number, they at length ascended a sacred mountain, and from its peak and summit caught sight of the sea, whose waves, far in the distance, broke on the shores of their beloved

Ionia. "Dashing away their bucklers, with a hymn of joy they rushed tumultuously forward. Some wept with the fullness of their delicious pleasure, others laughed, and more fell on their knees and blessed that broad ocean. Across its blue waters, like floating sea-birds, the memorials of their homes came and fanned their weary souls. All the perils they had encountered, all the companions they had lost, all the miseries they had endured, were in an instant forgotten, and naught was with them but the gentle phantoms of past and future joys." O, Home! magical spell, how strong must have been thy influence when thy faintest memory could cause those bronzed heroes of a thousand fights to weep like tearful women!

But what is home? It is that charmed circle consecrated by the presence of a husband, adorned and beautified by the taste and skill of a wife, hallowed by the virtues of a father, sanctified by the gentle ministrations of a mother, and filled with joy and sunshine by the love and prattle of children. In the quaint Scottish brogue of Burns, it is where a man's

"Wee bit ingle, blinkin' bonnily,
His clean hearth-stane, his thriftie wifie's smile,

His lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary, carking cares beguile,
And makes him quite forget his labor and his toil."

Home is of divine origin—an idea in the mind of the Creator, and only reaches its true character and full significance when it conforms to the original appointment of God. Adam was alone; all other creatures had their fellows, but as yet no companion was in existence capable of being the associate of this highest creature of the new creation. "It is not good," said the Lord God, "that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him," not of the dust of the earth, as I have made him and every beast of the field and fowl of the air, but in such a manner as that she shall be part of his own life, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, so that they shall cleave together in a holy union, deeper and dearer than that of any other relation.

There is something peculiarly impressive and instructive in the production of this companion for man. She was not created simultaneously with himself. He stood alone. All other creatures had their companions, appeared in the creation male and female together. But a lesson must here be taught the newly rising pair,

and through them the future race—a lesson on the importance and significance of this sacred union; a lesson on the mutual dependence of these two beings, of the imperfection and incompleteness of the one without the other, on the intimate and endeared relationship which was ever after to be continued between them. Hence woman did not appear along with man; not until he had seen and felt himself alone, incomplete and imperfect in the vast and beautiful creation about him; not until he had himself, perhaps, sighed for fellowship and companionship in his own kind. Nor then was a companion created for him out of the ground; that would have been cold and meaningless. It answered well enough for the transient union and intercourse of the inferior creatures; it would not have answered for the permanent, deep, and spiritual union which was to take place between these higher creatures. The companion of man appears under imposing and impressive circumstances. Adam sleeps, and a part of himself is taken and employed in this new creation. She appears before him as if she had risen from his own side, from near his own heart, a companion springing up from the

depths of his own life. How he must have been impressed with this wonderful production of his future companion! He recognized and felt the lesson; and "Adam said, this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man." And, then, from the way in which our Savior puts it, it seems as if God himself broke in upon Adam's soliloquy and said, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh." The force of this language is much better felt through the Hebrew than in our English version—therefore shall she be called *Isha*, a female man—and because of this wonderful manner of creation, and this tender and profound relationship to man, it shall be the tenderest and most sacred of human relations, and a man shall leave even father and mother and cleave to his wife. Evidently this creation of woman was not, in the estimation of either God or Adam, a mere beautiful side-play, but was intended for a profound and significant lesson for all coming time.

Not only did this impressive production of the woman secure this foundation of a sacred

and endeared union between man and woman, but it also secured another purpose of God which he declared when he said, "It is not good that the man should be alone, I will make a help meet for him." Not a *helpmate* as we often hear it, but a help *meet for him*, a companion worthy of him, an associate proper for him, his equal, his counterpart, his second self, one that he can love, and in whom he can find the complement of himself, and who finds her complement in him.

Much has been said and written with reference to the relative strength and capacity of man and woman in the attributes of human nature. By some, woman is made to be the duplicate of man, his equal in all respects, in intellectual and moral endowments his fellow; by others she is exalted far above him, at least in respect to the finer sensibilities of human nature; and by others still she is made to occupy a position greatly inferior, at least in the scale of intellectual endowments.

We have no sympathy with these comparisons and contrasts. There is no real place for them; they are two distinct beings; sex is not a mere physical variation; it is a radical, a con-

stitutional difference. Woman is not another man, man is not a duplicate of woman. A duplication of the same being was not the design of the Creator, nor would it serve the purposes of the mysterious union he intended between them. Marriage is not a friendship; it is vastly more. Friendship in itself is beautiful enough. Tender, indeed, was the friendship of Jonathan and David, of Damon and Pythias, and it is possible, however dangerous, that there may exist a "Platonic intimacy" and friendship between man and woman, but it is not love, and Platonic intimacy is not marriage; it is vastly different both in kind and in degree from the profound life union of husband and wife.

Nor is woman man's inferior, a mere dependent upon his pleasure or his affection. She need not be either

> "A weakling girl who would surrender will,
> And life, and reason, with her loving heart,
> To her possessor; no soft, clinging thing
> Who would find breath alone within the arms
> Of a strong master, and obediently
> Wait on his whims in slavish carefulness;
> No fawning, cringing spaniel, to attend
> His royal pleasure, and account herself
> Rewarded by his pats and pretty words;
> But a round woman, who, with insight keen,
> Has wrought a scheme of life, and measured well

Her womanhood—her brain and heart meanwhile,
Working in conscious harmony and rhythm
With the great scheme of God's great universe,
On toward her being's end."

She is his equal, his fellow, the companion *meet for him* made by God. They are *equal*, but not *identical;* they are not intended for the same office and work in the needs of human life. It is his to think, to toil, to provide, to lead; it is hers to feel, to reward, to endure, to follow. It is his to go out to battle with the world, to meet its contests, to carry forward its history, to wrest from it the means to provide for, to protect, and defend the sacred kingdom of home. It is hers to cheer and encourage, to aid and comfort, to meet with the smile of approbation and the reward of love the returning hero, the wayworn traveler, the weary laborer, the care-worn merchant, the exhausted student. It is his to produce; it is hers to weave the results of his toil into blessings. It is his to make the world wiser, and richer, and better; it is hers to make the world purer, more happy, and more beautiful. Possibly he may have the more intellect, certainly he has a larger brain; what of it? She has the greater sensibility, and is more richly endowed in those finer quali-

ties that we call heart. He may have more strength, certainly has a larger frame, more compact bones, and powerful muscles. What of it? She is more beautiful, and her gentleness is her strength. He may have a broader comprehension, she has deeper insight; he may have better reason, she has deeper sympathy; yet we can not say that one is superior to the other, any more than we can say painting is superior to sculpture, or poetry to music, or birds to flowers. "The man is not without the woman, neither is the woman without the man." "He that made them in the beginning made them *male* and *female*," made them in beautiful harmony and adaptation to each other.

In spite of the so-called progress of modern times, and of all we have seen written or heard spoken on the rights and wrongs, the demands and destinies of woman—and we have read and heard much—we have seen nothing to convert us from the old and sublime lessons floating down to us from the lips of the Creator, and from the morning of the creation. In spite of the sneers that have been heaped upon the word, we still believe the Creator had a lofty design in the manner of woman's creation, and

that he assigned to her, as well as to man, her own peculiar "sphere" and work, her own place in the economy of human life, and that there is no higher place or work on earth than the Creator has given to woman. What loftier, more potent, more sacred sphere is found in the world than home? What holier names are found beneath the sky than wife and mother? Home—the household—we still believe, is the sphere of woman, and woe be to both man and woman when the world repudiates it, or woman discards it. She was not made for the toils, the strifes, the excitements of the busy, outside world, and man and society are at fault when they thrust the necessity for it upon her. Gentleness is stamped upon her in all respects, and not only is a meek and quiet spirit her greatest adornment, but it is the most essential characteristic of her nature. In proportion as she departs from it, she so far loses in the grace, the beauty, and the power of her character. In the busy world she is lost—at home she shines as the sun and center. Let her be slow to exchange it for any thing else.

Nor should she be ashamed of this position. She should rejoice in it, as the sphere in which

she remains supreme. Nor should she be betrayed into underestimating its importance. What would life be for either man or woman, if it were not for this vast sphere of female usefulness and activity? if it were not for homes, for domestic joys, for fireside virtues, for social relations? What is the mere bald picture in its naked outlines, uncolored, unadorned, unshaded? So what would human society be without the softening tints, the gentle shadings, the mild beauties thrown over it by the hand of woman? What would the world be if it were not for singing birds, for blooming flowers, for sloping hills, for beautiful landscapes, and for star-lit skies? So what would human life be if it were not for the beauty, the virtue, the bliss, which spring up, and bless, and adorn it in this sphere of action which God has assigned to woman? If the great Creator himself thought it not unworthy of his labor to adorn the home of his human creature with beauty, and to throw over all his works a veil of harmony and peace, let not woman think it an undignified position when God has placed this department of life and of the world in her hand. Because the sun shines by day, shall the peerless moon blush to

ride in her chariot of silver through her dominion of stars by night?

Woman's ambition should be to shine at home, to shine in the social, beautiful, and peaceful scenes of life. In this very day society has no greater want than rest, homes of peace, where both men and women can find relief from the toil and excitement of the busy life we are living, and every woman who makes and preserves such a home is a benefactress of the race that needs not blush before the philanthropist, or the philosopher, or the statesman. So sings one of the brightest ornaments of the sex:

"As some fair violet—loveliest of the glade,
Sheds its mild fragrance on the lovely shade,
Withdraws its modest head from public sight,
Nor courts the sun, nor seeks the glare of light,
Should some rude hand profanely dare intrude,
And bear its beauties from its native wood,
Exposed abroad its languid colors fly,
Its form decays and all its odors die,
So woman, born to dignify retreat,
Unknown to flourish, and unseen be great;
To give domestic life its sweetest charm,
With softness polish, and with virtue warm;
Fearful of fame, unwilling to be known,
Should seek but heaven's applauses and her own."

We say nothing here of woman's rights. She has one right at least that all concede, which gives her power to rule the world, to do what

she will with it, if she but cares to wield it. But the one spring of her power is the spring of the divine power, and of the power that lies in all nobleness and goodness, the power to love, to bless, and to save.

II.

THE MARRIAGE RELATION.

HE creation of man and woman under the beautiful and impressive circumstances recorded in the Word of God, and reviewed in the previous chapter, is itself the Divine institution and the Divine definition of marriage. "He that made them in the beginning made them male and female," and said, "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they twain shall be one flesh." "Wherefore," says the Savior, "they are no more twain, but one flesh." These, it is to be remembered, are the words of God himself, as they are declared to be by Christ, and not, as they have often been supposed to be, the words of Adam. God made man male and female for this end, and in these words delivered his own ordinance to mankind, at once creating a more imperative union than that of parent and child, and permitting and

directing a dissolution of the filial relation, that the parties might henceforth leave father and mother and cleave to each other. Not that parental affection should cease or perish, or the filial relation be abrogated, but that it is safer for society, and better for the race, that the union of man and wife should be more indissoluble than the relation of parent and child. Nor could this have been an ordinance for Adam alone. Adam had neither father nor mother, and he was married by God himself, so that he neither needed, nor was this sacred ordinance adapted to him. It contemplated his posterity, and was the ordinance of marriage instituted in the beginning and applicable in all times and for the whole race. The law of intercourse between man and woman is marriage, and marriageonly—a union, too, designed from the very beginning to be the union of one man and one woman.

Thus introduced by God it is perpetuated and regulated through all the subsequent relations of his Word. In the New Testament, Christian marriage and the Christian family are recognized and blessed both by the Savior and his apostles. Our Lord himself recognizes and

sanctions this holy estate, yields reverence and obedience to the parental relation, and adorns the marriage of Cana with his presence and first miracle. Indeed, he not only recognizes it, but his purity and wisdom, his gentleness and lovingness seemed necessary to a perception of its mysterious import and high significance. He it is who is capable of lifting it out of the corruptions and abuses of ages, and of exalting it to its true import and sanctity by his heavenly lessons with regard to it. Rising above the abuses of scribes and Pharisees, and even above the accommodations of Moses, he restores the significance and authority of the original institution. He rescues the wife from the degradation of a vassal or even an inferior, by wresting from the husband the power of capricious divorce, and by placing about this holy estate greater safeguards, by his more carefully defined and more stringent rules with regard to a dissolution of this union.

He himself and his apostles make use of marriage as a beautiful and expressive figure of the mystical union between Christ and his Church. "*Thy Maker is thy husband*," is one of the most endearing allusions and most pa-

thetic appeals of God to his people. "I will marry thee, yea, I will marry thy land," is one of the most tender and significant promises of the Bible. The highest revelations of the Divine character in its relations to men are taken from the family. "*The Father*" is the highest conception that even Christ can give us of the blessed God whom he makes known to men, and THE CHILDREN OF GOD is the highest prerogative he can confer on them that love and fear him. To express the tenderness of his love for his people Christ presents his Church as a bride adorned for her husband, and under the figure of his marriage with this bride presents the glorious consummation of his mediatorial reign. It is, indeed, the New Testament and the lessons of Christ, the latest and completest revelations from God, which have given true dignity, sanctity, and felicity to this holy estate, and determined the true relations of man and woman, husband and wife. In the light of these revelations let us study it more fully.

1. *Marriage is a sacred institution.* The Scriptures are clear on this subject. It is of Divine origin and appointment. We receive it

from God, and it is subject to *his laws alone*, and not to *laws of men.* It is older than human governments, and is among those things for which men are accountable to God, and for the use or abuse of which they must finally answer to him. Christian governments may and should recognize it, regulate and guard it, as they recognize and regulate the holy Sabbath. But it is not originated by them, nor is it their province to change its significance or modify its obligations. God made it, and his laws alone control it. The conditions of entering into it and of separation from it, are fixed in advance by him, and human legislation can neither legalize it nor grant divorces from it, except in accordance with its significance and God's appointment.

Marriage is not, then, as we too often hear, a civil compact, but a Divine ordinance, and "what God has joined together, let not man put asunder."

"God never made his work for man to mend."

We have many would-be reformers in the present day in almost all departments of social and moral life, and among them domestic reformers,

socialists from abroad and sensualists at home, who are only able to conceive of liberty in the light of licentiousness, and who have grown weary of the just and wholesome restraints necessary for the very existence of society; men and women who would be wise above what is written, and who, looking upon the word and institutions of the Creator as antiquated and inapplicable to the times, would turn our domestic institutions and relations upside down. And, forsaking the wise institutions of God, what would they substitute? Spiritual lovism, mesmeric attractions, unions of affinity, promiscuous marriage, popular divorces, parentless children, husbandless wives, motherless homes, and social anarchy!

2. Marriage *is an honorable institution.* "What God has made pure let no man call common or unclean." God has pronounced it honorable in all, and when mistaken sanctity has set it aside, history has demonstrated that the consequences are but little less fatal than when licentiousness has ignored it. It was in the world before sin was, and is the only pure thing that has come down to us from before the Fall. God himself performed the first marriage

ceremony amid the purity and sanctity of Eden, and the grandeur and beauty of the sinless Paradise, while the "God with us" made his first public appearance, and introduced his ministry on earth by his first miracle at the marriage in Cana of Galilee. We have always felt the fitness and beauty of the opening of this divine ministry in the family; that Christ's first work should be in the home. Here he touches, recognizes, and sanctifies the very roots of society. All begins with the family; here is infantile humanity, the germ that is to grow and become the man, the nation, the Church; out of this first sanctuary are ever going forth the forces of society; in this charmed circle Religion is ever to find her first and most genial home. The anointed Messiah therefore begins his sacred ministry for the world at the very foundations of human life—he sanctions and blesses first of all a true marriage!

3. It is a *universal institution.* It is not simply a relic of Jewish antiquity. It began before Abraham, the father of the Jews, was born. It began before the Flood. It dates its origin at the beginning of the race. It was God's first institution for the benefit and wel-

fare of mankind, appearing, probably, within the first holy week, when the new world and the new race were just rising into life. It is radical, lying at the foundation of human things. It is not simply a law or institution of Christianity, it is the law of the race.

4. In itself considered, it is a *solemn compact or covenant* made between two parties, made in the fear of God, not in the light of a civil compact, but of obedience to a divine ordinance—an agreement of which God himself is a witness and on which is invoked his blessing. It is a compact made in view of the responsibilities of time and eternity, made solemnly and perpetually as the basis of a life union, founded on the purest affection and most upright designs of the parties.

5. It is not only a compact or covenant in which two persons agree to live together, but it is *a profound union of two hearts*, a union so intimate that it amounts to a mysterious identity. "They twain shall be one flesh." "This is a great mystery," says the apostle. They are no longer two, but one, one in all duties, interests, hopes, and pursuits. Their lives are blended into one life. Those who enter into it

should understand that ever after there is but one end to seek, one rule to acknowledge, one hope to animate, one cup of weal or woe to share. There can be no separate interests; the first appearance of this is the entering wedge which separates their hearts, is the rising cloud which is to darken their future lives. The smile of Heaven must bless, or a frowning Providence depress, both alike. Hand in hand they must tread the same pathway, be it through darkness or in the clear sunlight, over flowers or on thorns. This mysterious and profound oneness is the emphatic significance which the Creator gave to the marriage relation, and is the foundation on which Christ rested his stringent law of divorce.

6. *The only true basis of marriage is affection.* Following in the light of the Great Book which utters the words of Eternal Life, we are not ashamed to say the first and essential bond of marriage, and the charm which casts the brightest radiance over it, is LOVE. Who has not felt its power, and who has not seen its beauty? Beautiful every-where; in the gay and happy world of life about us; beautiful when it paints rainbows in the face of the babe, whose spark-

ling eyes beam it out like rising sunshine on the parent; beautiful in childhood, to whose joyous laugh it gives the sweetest ring; beautiful in the family circle, as it sparkles in the eyes of the loving sister, and throbs in the heart of the manly brother, drawing them together, the one to lean upon a brother's arm, and feel the safety of the love that is there, the other proud of the purity and innocence of the affection that throbs in a sister's heart; beautiful in the wife, as she lays her head on the husband's breast, and there consecrates to him and to God her heart and life; beautiful in the husband, as in the pride of a manly devotion he throws his protecting arm around the dependent wife; beautiful in the mother, as it looks out through her gentle eyes, beams in her loving face, trembles in her household song, mellows in her maternal voice; beautiful in the father, as it nerves him for his toil and makes his heart strong as he goes forth to work for those he loves; beautiful in the evening, when returning weary, and worn, and tired of the busy world, he takes off the incasings of his heart, and cools and blesses it in the atmosphere of home.

We repeat, the only true basis of marriage

is affection. Upon no other condition does God sanction or bless it. Entered into upon any other consideration it ceases to be marriage, and is degraded into the insignificance of a mere civil compact. Not for the sake of alliances of interest or distinction, not for the sake of fortune or rank, not for ambition, avarice, convenience, or sensuality is this holy estate to be invaded. Love, an exclusive love, which sees in its object the being whom of all others it would draw to itself, is the golden chain which is to bind these hearts, is the sacred principle which is to sanctify this union. It is the pillar of cloud which is to throw its shade over their dwelling by day, and the pillar of fire which is to illuminate their sanctuary by night. And this affection must never be suffered to cool; it must ever burn and glow like the star that keeps watch in the midnight sky; or like the swan, whose whiteness gathers new luster with age, and which utters its sweetest note in death. This duty does not often fail on the part of the wife; the danger is in the busy, money-loving and money-getting husband. We do not like the man that does not love his wife and home. Such a man "is fit for treason,

stratagems, and spoils; let no such man be trusted." Unprincipled, or thoughtless, or sadly deceived must be the man who can forget that she has left all to follow him; that she has turned the tide of her affections, hopes, duties, and destiny away from all others to concentrate them all upon him, whom her confiding faith has believed to be worthy of her trust and affection. In that confiding faith she has come to place her heart, her life, in his hands. Such faith demands the ever-answering love of her husband.

"There is no one thing," said Leigh Hunt, "more lovely in this life, more full of the divine courage, than when a young maiden from her past life, from her happy childhood, when she rambled over field and moor around her home; when a mother anticipated her wants and soothed her little cares; when brothers and sisters grew from merry playmates to loving, trustful friends; from the rooms sanctified by the death of relatives; from the secure backgrounds of her childhood, and girlhood, and maidenhood, looks out into the dark and unilluminated future, away from all that, and yet, unterrified, undaunted, places all that future in the hands of a stranger

she has seen and loved." Surely every true man will tenderly cherish such an offering of affection, and will bear long, and suffer much, before he will forget or trample upon such confiding love. In marriage woman risks most, nay, she risks all. She gives up all for one. If that one be true, manly, faithful, she feels a recompense for her loss; but if he be false, cowardly, and treacherous, she can only pine in secret, and lament the hour when first she listened to the heartless words with which he deceived her young and trusting heart.

What are styled among us marriages of convenience or of interest are but civilized forms of actual barbarism. The Zulus of Africa trade off a young ox for a wife; in China the parties never see each other till the contracts have been signed; the Hindoos betroth their children at an early age, and without the least reference to the inclinations of the parties. No wonder, we say, that among these people matrimony is in general at first only a farce, and often afterward a tragedy. But how much better than these customs of barbarism is the annual auction of females at our prominent watering-places?

No nearer to the true significance of marriage are what may be called "marriages of despair," when disappointed parties hurry off to cover their chagrin or to inflict a fancied vengeance by a hasty marriage. When the heart has loved, and has been defrauded of its love, it is but a fatal remedy to cast it away in a living sacrifice upon some other object. The wreath may be around the head, but the fire burns into the soul, and eats without consuming. Unless, then, the choice of mutual love precedes the holy vow, marriage is but a mockery, or but a vulgar provision for a settlement, or a reckless venture, and no wonder that in such cases the consequences are almost always fatal.

III.

BENEFITS AND OBLIGATIONS OF MARRIAGE.

ARRIAGE is a happy state. This is the condition chosen and designed by God as the one most calculated to secure man's highest welfare and happiness. "It is not good for man to be alone," is a Divine opinion, and in the belief of it he made him a wife. Wedded life is not all sunshine; its paths do not all lead through beds of flowers and avenues of beauty; it is not all happiness; it has its cares, its crosses, its responsibilities, its self-denials, but it is capable of affording the highest happiness to be found in the present life; it is the condition in which are to be found the richest supplies of peace and joy which the world affords; it gathers around man and woman the circumstances capable more than all others of making them happy, and is that position in which, undoubtedly, the greatest amount of

happiness and the greatest number of happy people in the world are found. There are unhappy marriages, but the fault is not in the institution, but in the individual.

Marriage is a safe state. Men and women do not only want happiness, they want safety; they long for security. They live in a dangerous, tempting, sinful, changeful world; they need a place of safety and shelter, a quiet retreat from the busy world; in a word, they need *a home.* Man especially needs a place where he can feel that all is safe and trustworthy; where his interests, his welfare, his reputation, his plans, his heart are secure; where there is no enemy, no spy, no hidden tempter; where his soul breathes easy, and his heart beats lightly, and all around him is innocence, truth, and love. The world offers no such place but in the charmed circle of wedded love.

No man has better summed up the benefits of this sacred relation than the famous Jeremy Taylor. "Marriage has in it less of beauty, but more of safety, than the single life; it hath not more ease, but less danger; it is more merry and more sad; it is fuller of sorrows and fuller of joys; it lies under more burdens, but is sup-

ported by all the strengths of love and charity; and those burdens are delightful. Marriage is the mother of the world, and preserves kingdoms, and fills cities, and churches, and heaven itself. Celibacy, like a fly in the heart of the apple, dwells in perpetual sweetness, but sits alone and is confined and pines in singularity; but marriage, like the useful bee, builds a house, and gathers sweetness from every flower, and labors and unites into societies and republics, and sends out colonies, and feeds the world with delicacies, and obeys their king, and keeps order, and exercises many virtues, and promotes the interest of mankind, and is that state of good to which God has designed the present constitution of the world."

But these benefits of marriage, inestimable as they are, are such as accrue to the individuals themselves; its broadest relations are, however, to society. Marriage is the groundwork of human society and government, and the chief corner-stone of all religion and virtue. It is the fountain of families; it is the source of all the tender relations, and of all the gentle and useful affections of life. Here in this garden, as beautiful and as fertile as Eden, spring up

those tender life-bonds of husband and wife, father, mother, child, brother, sister, and all those ramifications of life-ties which link us together in families and in circles of endearing relations. Here are born and cherished those beautiful affections of conjugal tenderness, parental love, filial piety, and brotherly and sisterly attachments, worth more than all the land and all the gold and silver of the world.

From marriage also spring into life the forces which give birth to education, which ennoble industry, which develop economy, which inspire enterprise, and which prepare for freedom. That we have so much of these in American Christian society is because the first of God's institutions is sacred among us. Sparta never produced any thing great in the arts or literature, because she respected not the ordinance of marriage, while Athens, through her regard for the marriage tie, was the first in both literature and the arts. Ancient Rome held sway while she had such women as Lucretia, but when she became licentious her power passed from her.

Says De Tocqueville, in his work on the United States, "I can only ascribe the inspiring principle of American greatness to the sacred-

ness of their domestic relations, and the superior character of their women." And so it must be. Woman is the appointed preserver of whatever is good, and pure, and true in humanity. She is the first teacher. "The fountain of public order, refinement, intelligence, morality, and religion," said Daniel Webster, "is not primarily the school, but the family. And over this fountain woman, as the wife, mother, sister, is the presiding genius. Let the enchanted wand which she there waves be guided by intelligence and virtue, and the whole mass of society, like Peter's sheet, is lifted by the four corners toward heaven."

Human beings, always ready enough to complain of evils that threaten them, and of sufferings that are actually upon them, are proverbially slow in recognizing their blessings and in tracing them to the sources whence they flow to them. We live in the highest civilization and in the enjoyment of the multitudinous blessings and comforts that flow to us from a state of society characterized by peace, refinement, courtesy, morality, charity, and obedience to the great principles of law and order, and yet are exceedingly apt to forget that it is our superior

home-life and culture that lies at the bottom of all these grand characteristics of our civilization; that in this fallen and disordered world the institution of marriage is the most potent instrument by far, among all our laws and institutions, in sustaining and consolidating the fabric of society. And it is marriage, too, in the high significance and state of strictness to which it has attained in modern society, and under the fostering influences of Christianity, which alone is capable of producing these highest and grandest results. Certain modern reformers in their bold and far-reaching complaints of the so-called burdens and restraints of married life forget this fact, and that it is these very restraints entailed on society by the marriage bonds that make it the beneficent institution that it is. Marriage derives its essential and specific character from restraint; restraint from the choice of more than a single wife; restraint from choosing her among near relatives by blood or affinity; restraint from the carnal use of woman in any relation inferior to marriage; restraint from forming any temporary or other than a life-long contract. By the prohibition of polygamy it concentrates the affection which its first tend-

ency is to diffuse; by the prohibition of incest it secures the union of families as well as individuals, and keeps the scenes of dawning life and early intimacy free from the smallest taint of appetite; by the prohibition of concubinage it guards the dignity of woman, and chastens whatever might be dangerous as a temptation in marriage, through the weight of domestic cares and responsibilities; by the prohibition of divorce, above all, it makes the conjugal union not a mere indulgence of taste and provision for enjoyment, but a powerful instrument of discipline and self-subjugation, worthy to take rank in that subtle and wonderful system of appointed means by which the life of man on earth becomes his school for heaven. Thus in the sanctity of the marriage tie between two persons is the symbol of a perfect humanity, and wherever it is broken the bond and symbol of a perfect society are violated. Wherever it is kept pure in a nation, the men and women of that nation will be strong in action and noble in thought; and history tells us, in many a voice, that an empire never fell till corruption had entered its homes.

It has been Christianity alone which has

been able to restore and preserve to mankind this sacred institution in its primitive purity and significance, and even to enlarge its power and meaning. When we reflect for a moment how marriage stands related to the purposes, methods, and successes of Christianity, we do not wonder at God's care for its preservation, or at the Divine Redeemer's concern for its purity and perpetuity. Religion, the religion of God and the Bible, has given to man this beneficent institution, and it has given back its own powerful influence, and presented its own fruitful sphere to religion. Marriage, creating the household and the family, secures the only hopeful conditions for the existence and perpetuation of Christianity. Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, does not dwell with the sensualist, will not take up her abode in the midst of polluted and licentious societies; she seeks the quiet fireside; she comes to nestle around the domestic hearth; she seeks shelter amid the gentleness and purity of human homes; she lives and grows only in her full strength and symmetry amid the tender affections and gentle charities that cluster around the altar of marriage.

But marriage is not necessarily in itself either a beneficial or a happy estate; what the domestic life of any married pair shall be depends almost entirely on themselves; they may fill it with harmony and peace, and may dwell in an atmosphere of benedictions, or they may pervert it into a scene of discord, distrust, and misery, from which both parties would be glad to be free. But this perversion and consequent misery is not the fault of marriage, or chargeable against it, any more than are the sufferings of disease chargeable to the delicate nature of good health. The Creator has instituted for us this kind of life; but whether the fire shall burn brightly on the hearth and cast its mellow tints over a household dwelling in peace, and harmony, and happiness, or shall cast its dim light in lurid shadows over scenes of discord and unhappiness, depends upon ourselves. Nor is the result a perplexing problem to solve. Marriage, like all other good things, has its laws and obligations; if these are observed the results will follow as the Creator has ordained. To a few of these laws or vital principles we now turn our attention. The most vital of all we have already noticed as an essential part of

marriage itself, namely, mutual love. We do not prescribe this as one of the duties—it is a part of the thing itself, and wherever it is wanting, whatever else the union of the parties may be, it is not marriage as God has ordained.

After this, the first law of domestic life is *mutual forbearance.* The importance of this to the married pair can not be overestimated. Marriage is a system of compromise and concessions. The parties are not *angels*, and if we sometimes almost think so in the ardor of affection we soon discover that we have been mistaken. The duties, cares, and intimacies of the married state, soon evolve to us the truth, that both husband and wife are but mortals—poor, feeble, erring creatures, the children of waywardness, selfishness, and sin. We are not long in discovering that our idol, though bright in our eyes as the sun, yet, like the sun, has spots in it. Nor should the discovery of these imperfections, or even of faults, estrange our affections, or create a feeling of disappointment which must lead to coolness and indifference. The true conclusion to draw from this discovery is, that to secure the harmony and peace of *this union at least* we must compromise, and agree

to the rule of mutual forbearance and forgiveness. We say *mutual*, for let each remember that if the husband has found faults and blemishes in the wife, she too has found them in him. "The road to home-happiness lies over small stepping-stones." Slight circumstances are the stumbling-blocks of families. "The prick of a pin," says the proverb, "is enough to make an empire tremble." The tenderer are the feelings, the more painful is the wound. A cold, unkind word checks and withers the blossom of the dearest love, as the delicate rings of the vine are troubled by the gentlest breeze.

"The kindest and the happiest pair
Will have occasion to forbear,
And something every day they live
To pity and perhaps forgive;
But if infirmities that fall
In common to the lot of all—
A blemish or a sense impaired—
Are crimes so little to be spared,
Then farewell all that must create
The comfort of the wedded state;
Instead of harmony, 't is jar,
And tumult, and intestine war."

Such, too, is the nature of true affection:

"'T is gentle, delicate, and kind,
To faults compassionate or blind,

> And will with sympathy endure
> Those evils it would gladly cure;
> But angry, coarse, and harsh expression
> Shows love to be a mere profession;
> Proves that the heart is none of his,
> Or soon expels him, if it is."

Again, the busy, precise, exacting man is most likely to be at fault. Tenderness, delicacy, and gentleness are the natural qualities of woman. Forgiveness is the most prominent attribute of the sex. Says the quaint Jeremy Taylor, "If man is refined, woman is double refined," and her very delicacy of feeling makes her silent, forbearing, and forgiving with reference to her husband's faults. It is not every man that understands or appreciates the cares, and toils, and anxieties which gather round the faithful wife and mother; and she who bears them patiently, and for my sake meets them faithfully, deserves my patience and forbearance, and, above all, my tender sympathy, which is her greatest reward. The husband gains much, much in every way, who exhibits on all occasions this appreciating sympathy for his wife. He will soon discover how it cheers the heart, lightens the duties, and enwreathes with smiles the countenance of his wife; and who does not

know that the very sunshine of the household is these smiles of his wife? If we would have them, depend upon it we must make them. And while we think and say so much of the cheering, approving smile of woman, let us not forget that the approving, affectionate smile of the husband is as the light of the eyes to the patient, loving wife.

IV.

BENEFITS AND OBLIGATIONS OF MARRIAGE.—Continued.

THE second great law of the *household* is *social intercourse and confidence.* One of the strongest bonds existing around the fireside is that which arises from endearing social intercourse and the most unqualified confidence. We know of nothing more important to the permanent happiness of the married pair, nothing more capable of binding them together in a lasting union of interest and affection. Nor, on the other hand, do we know of any thing more powerful and rapid in leading to estrangement, coldness, and indifference, than the want of this social intercourse, mutual confidence, and unity of purpose.

Husband and wife are henceforth separated in an important sense from all the world, and from all other relations. This one has usurped the place of all the others, and henceforth they

are to make their own world, and secure their own happiness. Such a state creates its own interests and its own privacies, which should be known to the parties themselves alone. Suffer me here to exercise the privilege of the preacher and indulge in exhortation. "We would say, then, preserve the privacies of your own fireside, your marriage state, and your hearts, from father, mother, sister, brother, and all the world. Between you let no third person come, to share the secret joy or grief that belongs to yourselves alone. Build your own quiet world, not allowing the dearest earthly friend to be the confidant of aught that concerns your domestic peace. Let moments of alienation, if they occur, be healed and forgotten in after moments and years of faithful, devoted love; but never let the wall of another's confidence be built up between you and your wife's or husband's heart. Unbosom freely your joys and sorrows, your hopes and disappointments, your griefs and fears to each other, but to no one else. Let each be to the other the sole confidant in the wide world. Nothing will more cement your hearts together." Above all things, let the man who would have a happy home be found often

at the fireside. Let not business, journeyings, associations, social gatherings, club-rooms, selfish amusements, nor any thing else deprive your family of your society, your attention, and your care.

In the hurry of business of the present day, home is apt to be forgotten, though the one is for time, and the other is for eternity. A few hundred dollars richer at a man's death will not compensate for the loss his family has sustained from the absence of his own society and attention; nor will the thought that he has a few thousands more to leave behind compensate him for the loss of social and domestic peace and happiness which has been the price of his gain. We blame not that wife who murmurs and feels aggrieved, and grows cold and indifferent toward that thoughtless or unfeeling man who night after night leaves her to sit in solitude and dreariness, while he is off to the club-house, the theater, the billiard saloon, the bowling alley, or the convivial gathering, from which he too often comes home flushed with intoxication, or fresh from the gambling-table. He receives even less than his deserts if he is met with sullen silence, with hidden tears, and

finds a cheerless fireside and a heartless table, and a cold and unloving home on his waking in the morning.

Side by side with this social intercourse should be the most unlimited confidence. The more of it the better. The more the husband gives of it to his wife, the more he will find she deserves it. The man who withholds this confidence from his wife, not only so far and so seriously breaks in upon the claims of this endearing relationship, but also deprives himself of the safest, most unselfish, most careful, deep-seeing, and judicious copartnership the world offers him. There is a trait in woman's character which even in its relation to business no wise man will dispense with. I mean the keen moral insight of the female heart. Women, living as they do outside of the busy, skeptical, compromising world, will detect the moral bearings of an action with a rapidity that seems like instinct. Their intuitions, less disturbed by worldly influences, are vastly more active, and more pure and reliable than those of men. Their sensibility to right and wrong is unspeakably more delicate. No man who has a good wife should be willing to dispense with this in

any movement of importance. What if she is more timid, and careful, and upright? It may be the very thing you need. The steam-engine is very powerful and very useful, but it would be of little real benefit, and extremely dangerous, if not well provided with brakes and safety-valves. We would fix the extent of this confidence by a rule of the eccentric Rowland Hill. This great preacher said, on one occasion, that there were two things he always told his wife: first, he told her every thing that concerned her; secondly, he told her every thing that concerned himself. No man has a right to complain of the extravagance of his wife, who conceals from her the true state of his financial matters.

Following this must be *mutual enduring esteem and respect.* It is an easy thing to catch a husband or wife; it is a nice thing to hold one. We are all good anglers and marksmen, but many fail in bagging the game. All are adepts in setting traps and catching the birds, but how many seem to be totally destitute of all skill in making cages to hold them! How bright, and beautiful, and happy, and joyous are all honey-moons, but how tame, and insipid, and cold, and flat are many households! What a

beautiful, and polite, and gentle thing is courtship; but in how many instances what a stale and indifferent thing is possession! The fault is both antecedent and consequent; the error is before and after marriage. Said the peace-loving Penn, "Be sure you marry for love; but be equally sure you love what is lovely."

In selecting a companion, those life-long characteristics should be chosen, which neither adversity nor sickness impair, instead of mere wealth, talent, or beauty, which an hour's misfortune or sickness may blast forever. Men and women both should marry in equality; they should be companions, capable of mutual guardianship and deferential care, not merely for food, and raiment, and physical comfort, but for the higher wants of the soul. They should be companions in every moral, and intellectual, and Christian sense—mutual helpers of each other's joy and promoters of each other's highest welfare. Marriage is a school, wherein husband and wife should be reciprocally teacher and pupil. There is danger of unhappiness where one, in any respect, is much above the other. The young, romantic, thoughtless daughter of a millionaire may, in a fit of morbid sen-

timentality and romance, consent to run away with her father's footman; but it will not be long till she will remind him of the fact, and use him as a footman still. Many a youth, in the warmth and enthusiasm of early life, sees a bright, and gay, and beautiful thing in his pathway, and picks it up thoughtlessly and hangs it about his neck as an ornament, but, alas! he soon finds it is a millstone, ever dragging him down to the earth.

But I have said the fault is subsequent as well as antecedent to marriage; the parties should not only be equal in marriage, but should grow equally and harmoniously after marriage. The first step toward separation often is the laying aside of the graces, the kindnesses, the attentions, which first won and captivated. It is ceasing to be careful, to be polite, to be courteous, at home. It is the husband forgetting to repose confidence in the wife; it is the wife rising out of her sphere of gentle submission into one of authority, boldness, and exaction. Some women are even weak enough to marry husbands to rule over them, and they generally receive their own reward. Such marriages are always unhappy, as the wife acknowledges she

marries a fool, and is obliged to drag him after her all her life, and in the end finds she has less advantage over him than she supposed. The restless, impatient, aspiring wife may often succeed in reducing her husband to a position of inferiority. But what does she gain? She only degrades him in her own estimation and in that of the world; and as he sinks she sinks with him, for the position of the family is not determined by the wife but by the husband. A termagant may gain victories; but they are such victories as that of Pyrrhus; they are her own ruin. When the parties begin to think meanly of each other's character, or judgment, or talents, or appearance, there is but one step more to contempt, and then farewell to all domestic peace and felicity. When this begins, the delicate sentiment that belongs to the relation of man and wife is gone forever. If persons marry husbands or wives whom they do not profoundly respect, they are simply foolish, and must take the consequences of their silly blunder. If a woman marries a man of stupidity, in whose character she can not confide, she is still more foolish, and at the very beginning breaks her own holy vow to love, honor, and obey.

But another law of the true Christian household is *mutual solicitude for each other's salvation.* Marriage, we have seen, is a divine institution; it is given to the world by God, and is projected on a religious foundation; a vital element in it is the recognition of spiritual and divine things; it is not given to the inferior and transient animals, and in any thing like its true sense it is impossible among barbarous and uncivilized people; in its highest meaning it is an institution for immortal, spiritual, moral, and intelligent beings, and its highest felicity can only be reached where these facts of human nature and destiny are distinctly recognized. No wonder that where all moral and religious principles are neglected, marriage should fail in many of its most beautiful and beneficent results; it is simply expecting the best results of an institution, while the very elements by which those best results are produced are left out. The irreligious household can not be a happy one; and the fault is not in marriage, nor in the divine organization of the family, but in the simple fact that an essential element in the organization of the household is religion.

It is not difficult to see at how many points

religion touches the vital interests of the family. A recognition of the immortal life, and of the relations of the marriage union in time to the endless life in eternity, gives dignity and sublime import to marriage; the recognition of God as its author and of our responsibility to him gives solemnity and weight to the obligations of marriage; the divine grace and help secures cheerfulness in bearing its burdens; a grateful heart gives sunshine and happiness; obedience to God's laws secures order and harmony; pious examples wear away asperities from childhood, and mold the lives of children into goodness; the consolations of religion are the only sure supports under those trials and bereavements which are sure to come to every home; and the Christian spirit is the very atmosphere of peace and good-will in which domestic happiness must grow.

Religion in the family culminates in the family altar; without this the piety of the household is incomplete, however sincere and fervent it may be in personal or private manifestation. The piety of the family should express itself in a common prayer; that is, in a prayer which is the prayer of the whole family. When all bow

together, and the father as the priest of the family offers up the one prayer of the whole family, then we have before us the crowning glory of domestic piety and devotion, and we may be sure the divine blessing is resting on that home, and that love, harmony, order, and happiness are reigning in that household. Such a daily scene creates a peculiarly sacred atmosphere in the family. It becomes one of the most sacred and precious recollections of childhood. These pictures come up in fancy and stir up within us the dear home-feelings in after years, brightest among all the bright scenes which sin has spared to our world. When religion sits like an angelic presence by the fireside; when calm content is nursed in the lap of simple trust; when the world is conquered by the love that bears all and endures all; when all home duties are cheerfully performed, and the everlasting home is kept ever in view—then it is that marriage rises to a sublime type of the union that exists between Christ and his own body, which is his Church.

How this interesting relation, this tenderest of all earthly ties, this link that will be a precious memory at least in eternity, should inspire

a deep and abiding interest in the spiritual welfare of each other! Strange that in the midst of the confidences and intimacies of married life so much reserve is so often found on this subject. Why should the forbidden topic in this most sacred relation so often be the hopes and prospects of a life that is future and eternal? How many deep and poignant regrets are left behind, like poisoned arrows in the heart of the survivor, when ruthless death has come to sever this endearing union? And death must come. This union, sacred as it is, must be broken! "One must be taken, and the other left"—left overwhelmed with a desolation and sorrow to which nothing else is comparable. How bitter, then, the thought that all had not been done that might have been done to secure the eternal interests of the one that now is still in death! To saint or sinner the most fearful thought that mingles with the solemnities of death, is the terrible fear that all may not be well with the one that has gone before; while, on the other hand, the sweetest thought and most powerful consolation are found in the well-grounded hope that the loved one is not lost, but has gone before to the place of greater joys and more

enduring unions. How glorious is the hope that they who have walked together in the commandments of the Lord here, will meet together again in the bright mansions above, where sin can not enter to mar their happiness, nor death to sever the bond of union! And this, in God's design, is the end and final consummation of true marriage. "Wherefore, let us exhort one another daily while it is called to-day, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching."

V.

THE HUSBAND.

T is amazing with what thoughtlessness men often rush into the responsible relation of husband; with what an air of abandon they often take under their care and protection another human being, assume the responsibility of loving, cherishing, comforting, and keeping her in sickness and in health, of providing for her and the coming household, and of controlling to a very great extent her destiny, both temporal and spiritual. There is not on earth a more responsible position than that held by the husband and father. From the beginning he has been the recognized head of the family; the duty of provision, of protection, and, by consequence, of directing the household, has rested on him; though there has been in the advance of civilization some softening of the former interpretations of these prerogatives of the man, and some lessening

of the apparent distinctness of the spheres and offices of husband and wife, still the time has not yet come when the headship or responsibilities of the husband can either be thrown off by himself, or taken from him by another. If it ever does come it will be accompanied by the death-knell of home and the family, and will be the inauguration of social confusion, corruption, and anarchy.

We doubt not that as the world recedes from the ages of physical force, and advances more and more into the reign of intelligence and virtue, the seeming separation of husband and wife in the authority and responsibilities of a family will grow less and less, and especially will this be the case in what is usually considered the authority of the husband. When the world was ruled by muscle, rather than by mind, the husband naturally and necessarily assumed his place of authority. The great and absorbing question of life then was to live; the business of life was chiefly to provide for its maintenance, in the face of the odds that were against it. Human life then was a battle against unsubdued nature, against the wild animals, and against hostile neighbors. Without

the strength and the courage of the man the family could not then exist: it was his emphatically to create it, protect it, and provide for it, and in order to do this, it was his to control it. The house *then* was rather a fortress than a home, a place of safety rather than of virtue, culture, and happiness. As nature became subdued, as the wild beast was driven away, as hostile neighbors and tribes became reconciled, as mind triumphed over matter, and intelligence over force, the work of provision became easier, and that of protection less exacting. The fortress became a home, and the home, for its maintenance, created other duties and demanded other labors, in which the wife, as well as the husband, must take a large part. The distance between the two, therefore, in their relations to the family needs, lessened, and will continue to lessen, as intelligence and virtue increase, until they shall be equally important, and their duties and responsibilities shall harmonize in loving co-operation.

Still, as we have said, no progress or change can annihilate the difference between man and woman, or confound the spheres of activity to which they are respectively adapted. Husband

and wife can never change places. He can never become the maker of a home, the culturer of its virtue and refinement, the creator of its beauties and joys, or the fosterer of its affections. This is woman's work. She can never become the provider for the family; and when widowhood forces this necessity upon her, it is one of the saddest sights of our human life to witness her unequal struggles to win bread for her little ones, and "keep the wolf from the door;" the saddest sight, we have said, unless it be equaled by the condition of the man who is left, blundering and staggering, in his awkward and ineffectual efforts to continue a home, out of which have gone the light and presence of the wife and mother. Alas for the world, if modern reformers should ever succeed in entailing upon the world these sorrowful conditions of human life as permanent states of human society, in which wives, under the pretense of securing certain rights, should drag down upon themselves the widow's burden, and in which husbands should find themselves bereft of wifely inspiration, and left struggling to preserve at home those joys and affections which the manly woman has thrown away for outside ambitions

and struggles. The true home must have the man for it and the woman in it; must have the man to win, or seize from the outside world, things necessary for the inside world, and the woman to convert them into use and beauty; the man to create the home, the woman to bless and adorn it. The perfect household is the one where both these spheres are perfectly filled, and where they blend and intermingle in harmonious co-operation.

The sphere of the husband, then, must ever remain distinct and imperative in its duties and responsibilities. It is the glory of the Bible that away back in the ages gone it recognized and defined these permanent relations and duties, long before the world was able to perceive and understand them, and that as the world grows wiser and purer, it only grows nearer to the sublime ideals of social and individual duties and relations as God's Word at the beginning revealed them. The world will never be willing on the one hand to give up the divine ideal of the relations of husbands and wives, nor on the other will it ever be able to transcend this ideal. The Bible, in its prescriptions of duty between the sexes, towers sublimely

above all other books, and especially does it mount up in its conceptions of these relations between husband and wife, almost infinitely beyond the ideas and customs prevalent in the times when it was written. At once it places woman side by side with man, and lifting her from the position of a vassal, creates her the companion and fellow of himself, entitled to his esteem and love.

The Bible imposes upon the husband the duty of loving, protecting, and directing. "Husbands love your wives," is the Divine command. As we have seen, all the circumstances of the original institution of this endearing relation were purposely framed by God to awaken in the mind of man the sense of this obligation to love and cherish the companion that God created for him. Adam learned the lesson, and God immediately added, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife," which is as much expressive of the deep and earnest affection which the husband should have for his wife, as it is creative of a new and more binding relation than even that of parent and child. Nor does it prescribe an inferior affection, but indicates the

purest and most sacred form of love, as that which belongs to the wife. "Husbands love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church and gave himself for it." What depth, and purity, and constancy of affection are indicated by such language as this! And again, "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies; he that loveth his wife, loveth himself. Now no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church."

This we confess is a high order of love; it is, indeed, supreme, as far as earthly and temporal relations are concerned. And not only is it the command of God, but a moment's reflection shows it to be eminently due to the wife. Man is much more dependent upon his wife and indebted to her than he is in the habit of remembering. Though he may be toiling as the bread-winner of the family, still for every thing that is really beautiful, joyful, and blessed at home, he and all the household are most indebted to her. It is she, too, that has made the greatest sacrifices and taken the greater burdens and risks in order to share life with you and build up this new home. To you the

day of marriage is the inauguration of a new and richer life, is the birth of a new home; to her the nuptial hour is a parting from her home, her parents, her brothers, her friends; she ventures out alone with you into the pathway of love and duty. She cheerfully resigns all and risks all for your sake. Such faith and sacrifice demand your ever answering love. She gives herself to you, saying, "I am yours;" you accept the sacrifice, exclaiming, "You are mine." There was a time when these words of her self-consecration to you thrilled your heart with a new life; let the time never come when you will forget it.

This love should *be patient and forbearing*. The husband should ever appreciate and sympathize with a wife's duties. Remember she has cares, and toils, and anxieties which it is impossible for you fully to understand, and as she bears them patiently, and for your sake meets them faithfully, she deserves your patience and forbearance, and, above all, your tender sympathy, which is to her the greatest reward. Perhaps it is not given to men and women fully to comprehend each other, or entirely to appreciate each other's labors and bur-

dens; to do so would probably only burden each with the anxieties of both, while God intends this relation as a division and lightening of human cares, instead of a means of doubling them. Let each, however, be fully assured that the other has, in the necessary duties and anxieties of life, a sufficiently heavy burden, without either adding aught to the load of the other. Though the sphere of man requires more real labor, more muscular toil, and, perhaps, in some cases more mental expenditure, we are sure that of the wife at home is one of greater anxiety, of more tender solicitude, of more perplexing annoyances, and of more unremitting exactions. In addition to these her life has in it more mysteries, more risks, and seasons when her whole being seems drawn upon to accomplish her peculiar and wonderful office in the world. At such seasons especially, the wife deserves and needs the most loving sympathy, the tenderest patience and forbearance of her husband, and he who does not most fully and cordially grant them, and does not do all in his power to gather rest, and light, and hope about her is simply a brute. A wife peculiarly needs the approbation and commendation of her hus-

band. Men well enough understand how much they, even with all their boasted strength and independence, are cheered and inspired by the approbation and smiles which they meet at home. Be assured the wife in her monotonous life needs them even more than you. And she needs them at home, too, not merely in company. The love she requires and is entitled to is a love which is alive to her work and needs, which habitually seeks her welfare, which has an eye to her in all the purposes of life, and delights itself in mitigating her trials, augmenting her enjoyments, and promoting her honor and usefulness.

This love should be linked with respect, and a habitual regard to what is due to a wife's feelings and position. Man should always have a high respect and esteem for his wife. No one should ever enter into the relation under the advice of mere sentiment alone. Reason, conscience, understanding, will, should all have something to say, as well as the affections, which, at the best, are blind. Marriage is too sacred, it involves too much of obligation, it pledges too much either of good or evil to be undertaken without thought, and even most

serious questioning as to motive. Unhappy marriages are many. They desolate society, they corrupt public morals, they disgrace religion, but they might have been avoided in most instances, if not in all, had the parties to them paused and contemplated each other's fitness, had they made even a decent effort to look deeper than the mere surface of transient desire. There are many considerations on the basis of which men marry which perish in the using, and leave behind many dreary years of unhappy intercourse, unblessed by the light of affection. If you have married one whom you can not esteem and habitually respect, you have made a sad and almost fatal mistake, and can scarcely expect to realize in your position the full significance and the full blessedness of this relation. Most men, however, have not made this serious blunder, and the habit of a profound respect and regard for the companion of our life is easily secured and maintained by cultivation, and be sure that the results of that cultivation will abundantly compensate for all effort bestowed upon it. Cultivate a love for home, for its quiet, peaceful, pure enjoyments. Never think home monotonous, and if you have suf-

fered it to become so, change your course, and, on the contrary, make it so attractive that the heart will always point that way.

This love should be social and confiding; one of the strongest bonds existing between man and wife is that which arises from endearing social intercourse and the most unqualified confidence. Above all things let the husband who would have a happy home, see that he give to his wife and family a full proportionate share of his time and of his society. Let not business, journeyings, associations, selfish amusements, nor any thing else, deprive your family of that amount of your society, your attention, and your care, which they have a right to demand. We have already spoken of the enormous exactions and consequent dangers of the competitions of business in the present day. We will not recur to this again, except to enter our protest against making even business a supreme rival against the home and family, to protest against the insane struggle to build the nest while the bird and birdlings are perishing, against the intoxicated strife for wealth, while those for whom we seek it are fainting for something better than food and raiment. There are

other claims to which men yield themselves which even more than business cut them off from social intercourse with their own families; we mean the many associations, clubs, amusements, etc., which occupy so many evenings that could be spent with infinitely greater advantage at home. We would not ask a husband to debar himself from every amusement and enjoyment independent of his wife; his more active nature and employments may need recreations in which the wife could not participate; we would not have him give up all his associations, but we would have him dispense with every thing that lifts itself up as a rival to his home. His home is inexpressibly more dear and valuable to him than any other association, or any transient selfish enjoyment; it is well with many personal and temporary sacrifices to secure its permanent welfare and happiness. The fact is, many men do not really know how dear their own families are to them, until awakened to the discovery by some sudden calamity that has fallen upon it, leaving it broken and desolate, and themselves bewildered to find that a great light and sweetness had suddenly gone out of their lives. Then they feel how utterly

small all mere outside associations and all mere personal gratifications were in comparison with the simple, tender, and enduring joys of home.

Along with this social and personal presence and attention at home is demanded the confidence of the husband in the value and good sense of his wife; husband and wife are companions; their consultations should be often; their plans should be formed together; they are equal partners in this business, and the wife's voice is needed as much as that of the husband. Husbands quite too generally make the mistake of appropriating to themselves alone the credit of having built up the home, acquired the property, gained the position, etc., for the family In the great majority of cases the wife has had quite as much to do with it as he has had; if his part of the work has been in the shop, or store, or office, hers has been in the house; if he has been toiling at one end of the line, she has also at the other; if he has been making money, she has been saving money; if he has been lovingly laboring to gain ease and competence for the family, she has been just as lovingly, and as laboriously too, struggling to help him; she has been an inspiration to him, and

for his sake she has been patient, self-sacrificing, economical, and has gladly lifted from his shoulders every burden that she could carry, that he might be more free and light for the race. If you have succeeded, it is a joint success; if you have acquired property, it is a joint acquisition; it is hers and yours. We do not like to hear men talk of *my* house, and *my* farm, etc.; in very truth it is *our* house and *our* property. Women are beginning to realize and feel this matter-of-fact view of the case, and justly they may too; there is no little dissatisfaction in families growing out of this unequal appropriation of results on the part of the husband; the wife feels, and rightly too, that these results are as much hers as his; that she has also a right to their use, and especially a right to at least a loving consultation with regard both to the acquisition and the disposition of them. If denied this we may look for two consequences, both of which are hostile to the family; the first is a disposition on the part of the wife to demand ways by which she may acquire money or property which she may hold and use independently of her husband. Society is full of these demands to-day. The second

is that the wife feels her position to be one of inferiority and degradation, that of a dependent, instead of a companion and partner. Both of these serious tendencies of modern times would be cured at once by a proper adjustment of the relations of husband and wife in the great struggle for life and the acquisition of property. Let husbands give full and unlimited confidence to their wives in every thing that pertains to their mutual interests, and the contest in this regard will be at an end.

Headship or authority is an unquestionable prerogative of the husband. It is given to him by the appointment of God. "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord," is not simply apostolic advice, but is apostolic law. The significance of this law is presented in another form by the same apostle: "The husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the Church," and he thus defines the nature of this authority: "Let every one of you so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband." This authority, then, conferred by God on the husband, is an authority based on love. The husband is to exercise his authority in

love, and in no other way. Like the authority of God, it is only to be exercised for good. With these limitations there can be no danger of rigor or severity, and every true-minded woman approves of this, and finds her own dignity and reputation dependent upon it.

This authority belongs to man in virtue of his position and responsibilities. Every body must have a head, and every society must have subordination; the family with its multiplied duties and interests can not be exempt from this law. Domestic misrule and anarchy, if universal, would be social chaos. The responsible head of the household must be the husband. He is responsible to God and society—a responsibility which can not be met except as the controlling power. He is, hence, the superior, not in intellect or in character, but in office, in responsibility and obligation. It is his to account to God for the regulation of his house; it is he that is to represent it in society; it is his to provide for it, and to give it character and position; it is his, then, to have authority over it.

This authority, however, should only be wielded in gentleness and love; the husband

and father should avoid all harshness for trivial offenses. That reserved demeanor which is sometimes necessary in society and in contact with the world is out of place at home, and wounds the sensitive heart of an affectionate wife, creating coldness and distance where there should be warmth and trust. Each should exercise a forbearing spirit and mutual toleration of each other's failings. Ill humor should be carefully suppressed, for it never makes friends, but is often the rock on which success, happiness, and virtue are wrecked. The presence of the husband, instead of casting a gloom, should be a light of joy to a household.

His authority should be exercised only for the good of his household; and in this view it is his to fix the residence, to select the business, to determine the style of living, and the measure of expenditures. True, the basis of all this ought to be full confidence and unrestrained consultation with the wife. She should be acquainted with the husband's resources, the necessities of his business, his profits and losses, his embarrassments, and his successes. She ought to be made, and very gladly will she become the partaker of all his joys, and the

sharer of all his reverses and sorrows. The true secret of the successful exercise of authority at home, is to treat the wife as a rational being, and to let her know the reason of every regulation. The wife that will not then at once spring into sympathy with her husband's plans and wishes does not deserve the name of wife. Many a husband who has lived for years in the cold exercise of authority, and in the embarrassment of a foolish reserve, has found an angel of light in his home when he has opened up his heart and let his wife come in.

VI.

THE WIFE.

IT has not been our design hitherto merely to eulogize the institution of marriage, or to attempt to meet the tide of error and disaffection that is at present sweeping over it by throwing around it an illusive veil of fine word-painting. We claim for it divine authority and sanction. It is enough for us that God chose it and appointed it as the best and happiest state for man and woman in this life, and that all experience proves that God did not make a mistake. It is no more perfect in accomplishing its full purposes here than are other divine institutions that have to work their way in the midst of human imperfections. Our object has been simply to indicate the nature and obligations of this divinely appointed relation of men and women, to point out its duties, to discover, if possible, how to make it still more happy and still more power-

ful for good, and especially to direct attention to those rocks and quicksands on which the happiness of so many has been wrecked, and to indicate the trail of that serpent which in our day is crawling into so many homes, filling the air with its poisonous breath. We shall not depart from this method and object in the present chapter. We shall not attempt to eulogize the wife, but to point out her duty, or rather to learn, so far as we can, the true character, position, and work of the real wife.

It is not about woman, as such, that we are now writing. With the questions of "woman's rights" or "woman's work" in her simple character and relations of a woman we have just now nothing to do. When a woman chooses to become a wife she ceases to be simply a woman; she becomes something more; she has lost, and she has gained; she has given up some things that pertained to her as an independent woman that she might gain some other things that she could not possess in her individual character. What may a woman do? is one question. What is a wife? and what may a wife do? are very different ones. We would answer the first by saying, she may do whatever

she can, whatever comes within the range of her capabilities, mental, moral, and physical; she may pursue any study for which she has the talents; she may follow any business for which she has the capability; she may learn any trade for which she has the skill; she may secure and exercise any office which she has the ingenuity to obtain; she may enter into competition with men in all the pursuits of life, subject only to the disabilities which nature has placed upon her, which no discontent can change, and which no legislation can modify. But when this same independent woman becomes a wife she voluntarily assumes new relations and new duties—relations which God has created, and duties which he has enjoined. If she insists on maintaining the prerogatives that belonged to her as a woman, or determines not to accept the obligations and duties that come with marriage, she ought to decline to enter into this relation; otherwise it is attempting to be a wife and not a wife at the same time.

Wifehood is something real, positive, well-defined; if you please, it is a business, a profession, quite enough to occupy the heart, the head, the hands of any woman who enters into

it; it is hard for any one to pursue two professions at the same time. Right here lies the mistake of many; the wife, by becoming such, yields her individual independence; she can not both give it and retain it; the wife has already chosen her life-work, a great and onerous life-work; she can not pursue it and also another at the same time; she has already entered into a most important partnership, demanding her time and capabilities; she can not at the same time expend these capabilities outside of this partnership. As a single woman she may choose her own life, teaching, trade, law, medicine, matrimony; she chooses matrimony, and her life-work is before her; she needs no other. There is nothing gained by complaining that it is somewhat different with man; that he can choose matrimony and a trade, or business, or profession. The simple fact is that man's duty is to provide for his home, woman's duty is to make it; by marrying he becomes all the more an outside worker; by marrying she becomes an in-door worker; when he marries he assumes the obligation of labor and business; when she marries she no longer can pursue outside labor and business.

When the necessity of outside pursuits comes upon the wife by calamity, or by the husband's idleness or neglect, surely it is not "woman's right," but woman's wrong.

Surely the duties and responsibilities of wife and mother are occupation enough for any woman, and the restless discontent now so prevalent in many places must arise either in those households where there are but few family cares, or where ambition or the fascinations of society and fashion make these duties unacceptable. And surely, too, it is hard to conceive of any higher, more important, or more blessed occupation than that found in the cheerful acceptance and loving discharge of these wifely and maternal duties. For these woman is pre-eminently adapted; her vocation in this direction is impressed on every part of her being; here she can have no rival; here she reigns supreme. And yet, we repeat, it is altogether a matter of choice with her whether to enter into this sphere of life or to remain in the independence of single womanhood. We do not say that all women should marry, or that marriage is the only vocation for woman; but we claim that when she chooses to marry she

voluntarily accepts the relations and duties of the wife, and thereafter has no right to cast them off, or substitute others for them, or to be forever complaining that they are what they are.

But, whatever may be our human notions about it, marriage is what the Creator made it; not a perfect state, that in this life is impossible; not a perfectly happy state, for that we are not yet prepared; not a state of ease and rest, it is full of employment, cares, and responsibilities. But it is the most perfect, most happy, most safe, and most restful mode of life for both men and women in our present mortal state; it is the Creator's judgment of the highest and best human estate.

Christian marriage has been the great benefactor of women, and it is a sad thing to find so many willing to speak slightingly, some even bitterly, of the Book that has elevated them to the highest position they have ever attained in this life, because it prescribes certain duties and enforces certain limitations that conflict with their theories. That the Bible is right and these so-called reformers are wrong is evident from two very obvious facts; first, that the Bible theory of marriage has been working

through the generations as a divine benediction to both men and women, purifying the former, liberating, protecting, and defending the latter, nourishing them into honor, strength, and beauty; secondly, that the theories of our modern domestic reformers are producing a rapidly increasing harvest of discontent, social discord, domestic jealousy and strife, culminating in a fearful list of divorces, separations, infidelities, and murders, the theories themselves having already in some quarters run into wild extravagance and fanaticism. Surely the true and sensible women of our day are not ready for the subversion of our long-tried domestic relations and institutions by the social anarchy which must result from the theories of certain restless leaders out of whom pride and ambition have destroyed all genuine womanly feeling. The great battle against true marriage is fought against the duties and limitations which the ordinances of God throw around it, its enemies forgetting that these very restraints and limitations are what make it the beneficent institution that it is. It is exactly as these restraints grow less that marriage becomes less and less a bond of society, less an institution

of security and happiness to both men and women. Remove its restraints and we descend at once from Christian to pagan civilization. Nor should women forget that these restraints are after all more numerous in their application to husbands than to wives.

Often as the story has been told, it will be well to look again at the character and position of the wife as determined by the Bible and Christian civilization in contrast with other states of society, and also with the theories of our modern domestic reformers. To appreciate this contrast more fully we must remember where the Bible found woman. It was not in Eden, where God had placed her, the companion and helpmeet for man, for there was no Bible in Eden. The Bible began to be made about twenty-five hundred years after this, eight or nine hundred years after the terrible catastrophe of drowning a world which had already become so corrupt that God could no longer endure it—a corruption the chief element of which was that men and women had already forgotten their true relations toward each other, and had polluted themselves on the face of the earth. The Bible, with its revelations and new

restraints from God, broke in upon the world when men and women had again forgotten themselves and their mutual relations, and sensuality, and impurity, and polygamy, and concubinage were almost universal; when Egypt and Assyria were the great empires of the world, and God's laws, ordinances, and institutions developed themselves as great antagonisms to man's errors, and follies, and impurities, and crimes.

When God began to speak to men women had sunk to the position of vassals, of slaves, or mere instruments of man's pleasure; they were no longer his companion, were but seldom admitted to his society, were not permitted to participate in his social or religious enjoyments. This condition of vassalage and inferiority is still perpetuated where the Bible and the lessons of God are not known. Throughout all heathendom even yet, man refuses to recognize woman as his equal or companion, excludes her from his society, from his business, from his religion. In Persia, in India, in China, where we find the highest forms of unchristian civilization, woman is the mere slave of labor or instrument of pleasure. The poor man's wife is employed to

till the fields, or fish upon the waters, to bear burdens on the street, or is hired out at the husband's pleasure to labor for others. The rich man's wife is used to adorn his home, just as he would use a caged bird to sing for him, or hang up pictures to ornament his chamber, and the greater the number he can afford to maintain, the greater is the ornamentation. And what is a striking fact is, that the higher we ascend into the social spheres of society in these unchristian empires, into the wealthy, literary, and official grades of society, the more complete do we find this degradation of women. They are excluded from all those advantages, accomplishments, and enjoyments to which their very position would entitle them. They receive no education whatever; they are shut out even from religion itself; they are never seen in the temples attendant upon the worship, and if they have need of the offices of religion, they must steal away alone in the intervals of public worship to take counsel of a priest. Even in Mohammedanism, that highest reach of paganism, they are excluded from participation in the rites and ceremonies of religion, and are only assigned a place in Mohammed's Paradise as the

instrument of pleasure to man. Such has been universally the melancholy history of woman's destiny when left to mere human plans and devices. No form of civilization away from God's ordinances, no mere human ethics, or theories, or reforms have ever raised her out of this position of degrading inferiority. In society left to itself women can not and men will not change this unequal and unjust relation of the sexes.

Here the Bible found her. At one stroke, by a law and institution of God found among its first utterances, the Bible placed her side by side with man, as bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh, his equal and companion, the sharer of his joys and sorrows, the participator of his immortal destiny, the helpmeet for him, worthy of his companionship and love. God's ordinance gave her an equal destiny, embraced her in the counsels and provisions of his grace and love for the race, and made her an equal partaker in the promises, hopes, and experiences of the Gospel. The Bible is, far above all human theories, the supreme constitution of "Woman's Rights." Yet that same word that lifts her from the horrible pit, and establishes

her feet upon a rock, and puts a new song in her mouth, carefully defines for her, as it does also for man, her true character, position, and work, as woman, wife, and mother. The Bible simply recognizes her true nature, and assigns to her her true work, a work for which she and she only is qualified by the nature and capabilities which God has given her; that work is the sublime mission which is implied in the motherhood of the race. It is impossible to conceive a grander or more important one. It is easy to substitute for it some glittering trifles, to supplant it by some specious and illusive fancies of other spheres and other work; it is easy enough to complain of some of the hardships and of the sacrifices which this mission imposes on women; still, we repeat it, it is impossible to conceive a grander or more important work for human beings.

The Bible leaves woman free to accept or decline this mission; but having chosen to accept it, God's ordinance prescribes its conditions and its duties. The heavier ones he has made to rest on the husband. To fulfill her high office of wife and mother, she needs a home, a quiet, separate retreat, where she is

chief in influence and controlling in character; she needs exemption from the pressure of outside cares; she needs supplies for herself, her children, and her home. God has made it the husband's duty to provide all these for her. These, we claim, are pre-eminently "woman's rights;" the right as wife and mother to be exempted as far as possible from care, and anxiety, and labor, other than such as belong to her own office and work. The unmarried woman may exercise all the rights, if you please so to call them, of self-maintenance, and may if she chooses enter into the strifes and struggles of business and place; but she who consents to bear the responsibilities and perform the labors of wife and mother, must be exempted from these outside demands, another meeting and discharging them for her.

So God has seen it and ordained, and has appointed the husband as the head and provider of the household, and the wife as the mother, the teacher, the maker of the home. As we understand it, this is the subordination, and the only subordination taught in the Bible. It is the subordination of order; it simply expresses the necessary relation of husband and

wife; it is an order of things necessary to enable each to fulfill the duties assigned to them separately. The place of the husband, then, in God's ordinance, is that of headship, as the responsible representative of the family and provider for it; that of the wife is entirely equal in character and importance in the sight of God, but subordinate in office. She is the helpmeet, a companion, a counselor, a co-worker, a participator in the labors, joys, sorrows, successes, and disappointments of the home. "Man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man;" nevertheless, "man is not without the woman, nor the woman without the man." It is impossible to express better than the apostle has here done that mixed state of mutual endearment and dependence, and yet of official subordination and order which constitutes true marriage.

This true subordination implies no inferiority in the wife, and imparts no unjust powers to the husband. The submission of the wife is by no means a submission to wrong or oppression, any more than the authority of a husband is the authority of a master and tyrant. His authority is measured precisely by his duties as

a husband and father. Over the wife he has no other power; apart from these relations he is to her only a man, she is to him only a woman. A wife's subordination is measured also by her relation of wife and mother. Her submission is for the good and welfare of the home. His authority is parental; her submission is that of reverence and love. He directs in order that he may have the ability to provide; she obeys in order that she and her household may be provided for, and the home preserved in peace, and harmony, and well-being. This appointment of God is therefore founded on the highest philosophy and the first principles of human nature. It can never become obsolete, or cease to be binding. The apostle again seizes the exact idea when he says, "Husbands love your wives, as Christ loved the Church;" and "let the wife see that she reverence her husband." The true wife's submission will grow as naturally out of this loving reverence as the fruit grows out of the flower; and the woman who marries a man without feeling for him this loving reverence, makes a sad mistake which can scarcely result otherwise than in future sorrow, if not misery. And, by the way, the

man that so acts in his domestic relations as to destroy out of his wife's heart this ideal of his worth and excellence that she has lovingly reverenced, has broken the vase and scattered to the winds the precious aroma that would have poured forth as incense to hallow and bless all his married life.

The chief exercise of this authority of the husband lies in the direction of his responsibilities and duties as provider of the household. It is his right to regulate the home, determine the place of residence, fix the style of living, dress, etc. All these are to be regulated according to his means and circumstances. In this spirit the wife of the clerk, the mechanic, or laborer, should not aspire to live after the style of the man of wealth. The wife of the moderate business man should not expect to ape the style and equipage of the millionaire. The young bride just commencing with her husband the career of life should not aspire after the surroundings of the old-established man of business, whose capital is secured and whose income is ample. In all these things the wife should patiently, willingly, and lovingly submit to the circumstances and the resources

of her husband. The wife who complains to her husband because she can not go to as much expense as some other women, can not live in a house as showy, have furniture as beautiful, and dress as richly as her neighbor, is at once mean, ungenerous, and cruel.

There is a serious fault just here in American society, a fault almost peculiar to our country, and which undoubtedly springs, not necessarily, but naturally from our leveling and equalizing institutions. In theory in our country we are all free and equal, but we forget that in reality, in the practical circumstances of our life, this is not true; yet in despite of our positive inequality in circumstances, we strain every nerve to produce a sort of external equality and uniformity in our style of living, our dress, our habits, etc. How much evil, moral and social, and how much destruction of happiness and real prosperity spring from this silly attempt it would be easy to show. Young men, who are quite as much to blame in this respect as young women, decline to enter into the marriage state, because his bride will demand a more costly style of living than he can provide for, or, which is quite as likely to be the case,

because his own foolish pride will not allow him to begin life in less than the costly style of his employer whose fortune is made, and who is about ready to retire from business. The young girl is left unmarried, and the young man is left to the dangers and temptations from which a neat little home of his own would effectually preserve him. As a result, in many cases, a pressure that drives often to misery and sometimes to vice, rests on unmarried girls, and hosts of young men yield to the temptations around them, and are swept away in the current of corruption and sin. Or two young hearts marry, the pride of the husband determining him to ape a style which his income does not warrant, or the young, impatient wife demanding it of him. Then come discontent, complainings, or, worse still, crime on the part of either husband or wife. The cure for all this is simple. Let the young man cast away his foolish pride and be willing to begin life as his father began it; and let the young bride cheerfully and lovingly accept his lot and portion. Dearer by far will be the home that their own economy, and industry, and patient waiting have worked up into a home of comfort, or luxury, if you will.

VII.

THE WIFE.—Continued.

OME is the kingdom of the married woman; here she rules in a pre-eminent sense, and as we look upon home as the most beautiful, attractive, and important place on earth, so in assigning to the great majority of women the beautiful and important office of wife and mother, or creator and preserver of home, we are by no means assigning to them an inferior or unimportant place in the economy of our earthly life. Let no woman, then, think it an undignified position when God has placed this department of life and the world in her hands; let her rather understand its true importance, and thankfully accept the duties which are always inseparable from places of high trust. She can not carry this high responsibility without self-denial, sacrifice, and toil. They that would truly reign must be willing to serve. By its very nature the life of a wife and mother is

one of entire unselfishness; by its very constitution it is a life of ministry to others; it approaches nearer to that voluntarily accepted life of our divine Savior, who came into the world "not to be ministered unto but to minister," than any other human life, unless it be the consecrated life of the minister of the Gospel. It is not a strange thing, as some think it, that so much should be said and written of the duties of wives, and comparatively so little of that of husbands. In domestic happiness the wife's influence is much greater than that of the husband; in fact, the whole comfort of the household depends on her jurisdiction, and even the husband himself is greatly determined in character by the influence of the wife. It is an old proverb that "a man is what his wife will let him be," and although not entirely true, the proverb has truth enough in it to show the popular judgment as to the powerful influence of that woman whose life at home is like a prevalent spirit pervading all things in the house. The wife's influence is a subtile, pervasive, and continuous thing; rising up, lying down, going out, or coming in, she is there a constant influence, a beloved presence. To her

husband others have to gain access, she has a perpetual audience; she touches all the springs of his life; therefore among all the influences that act upon him none can be compared with that of his wife. A man may be good in spite of a foolish woman, but the chances are greatly against it; a man may be bad notwithstanding the presence of a discreet and excellent woman; but unusual temptation or great depravity will be required to effect such a result. The same pervasive influence reaches the children of the home; to them, too, the mother, not the father, is a constant presence molding their lives. It is no wonder, then, that with regard to all domestic matters the counsels and the exhortations are given to the wife rather than to the husband.

We shall, therefore, follow in the footsteps of many others, and even in this day, be bold enough to enter into some details, and proffer our advice to wives and mothers. It is quite probable we shall have but little that is new to offer, for we confess that our ideal of the true wife was drawn for us several thousand years ago. Though the world has made great progress in many things since the book of Proverbs

was written, it has yet made no improvement on the perfect picture of "the virtuous woman" as drawn there. Carefulness, personal attractiveness, kindness, economy, industry—every thing to make home happy, pure, comfortable, and beautiful are here ascribed to the woman whose "price is far above rubies."

The wife has won, and the first duty is to hold the affection of her husband. "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her." Nothing contributes more to domestic happiness than the possibility of this mutual trust. And remember that this possibility is to be learned after marriage; it is to come as one of the outgrowths of home experience; the wife and the husband must both learn from intercourse with each other, from the daily events and acts of their married life, that they can trust in each other. Many expect every thing from love itself, whereas love is only the genial soil in which the graces and blessings of wedded life are to grow. He that loves is ready to trust, but trust itself is based on experience. Let your husband learn early in your wedded life that you are worthy of his unhesitating trust and confidence. The basis of this is truth;

show yourself true in all the duties and relations of your married life; practice no deceptions; depend upon no illusions; be open, candid, frank, confiding; have nothing to conceal. Let your husband soon learn your wisdom and discretion; let him see your devotion and skill in managing your home and his; be careful for your husband's interests; show your disposition to manage well the economies of the household; let him see that you are quite as much concerned for the success and prosperity of the family as he is.

To win this trust of the husband's heart is something more even than to win the affection of the lover; it is love's ripened fruit; it is the wife's seal of faithfulness and her reward. The true wife will make her husband's love grow deeper and deeper as the months go on; the longer he lives with her, the more should he see to admire and love.

There are some most important things for maintaining this attractive influence over the husband that some women after marriage esteem lightly and therefore neglect. Among these is that modesty and delicacy of spirit and manners which is among the greatest charms of girlhood,

and which was probably one of the most potent influences in gaining the love of him who is now your husband. Perhaps women are incapable of appreciating fully the power of womanly modesty and delicacy over men, just as men can not fully understand the charm of manliness over the heart of a woman. It is evidently this contrast between the sexes, which we can not better express than by the womanliness of the one and the manliness of the other, which is most powerful in drawing them together. In the true woman man sees something quite different from himself, and yet is drawn to it as something quite necessary to himself; he sees in her qualities which are weakest in him, and which yet are essential to a true humanity. On the other hand, the true woman sees a similar contrast to herself in the true man, and feels drawn to him for those qualities in which her nature is weakest. In her eyes he is a hero; in his she is little less than an angel. This is not mere story or fiction, it is nature. Some strong-minded women smile at it in our day, and are willing themselves, and labor to persuade others, to cast away this womanliness and to ape the characteristics of

men. The same women would doubtless look with contempt upon the man who would cast away his manliness and ape the characteristics of women. There is much sneering just now at all that is said of this modesty, gentleness, and delicacy of womanhood, and a consequent danger of underestimating its value and importance in the married life. But in spite of all sneers, let us say to the young wife, especially, it was by these qualities you won your lover, and without them you can not retain your husband. For a wife he wants a woman; for boon companions, coarse, bold, and dashing, he can seek elsewhere; and let me assure you that if he finds in his wife only a poor imitation of what he found before in his associations with men, the temptation will be very strong to leave the manly woman at home, while he seeks the real men elsewhere. Hold him to yourself by being a woman, a true, refined, delicate woman; that you can be to him; that nobody else in the world can be to him while you are his wife; that he can not find among men; that he can not find among disreputable women; that, in the sense in which you can manifest it to him, he can find in no female society, however excel-

lent or refined. If he finds it in you he is yours beyond the power of all outside attractions; if he does not find it in you he is tempted to seek it elsewhere.

And just here, because we can not say it so delicately and beautifully, we quote from another words to clothe the thought that is in our mind: "To a high-toned man one of the sweetest attractions is that undefined and indescribable grace which floats like a cloud of beauty round a true woman; that maidenly reserve, yet that transparent frankness; that soul purity which lives and shines in every act and word, and yet does not know and never thinks that it is purity; which can never be put on; which is too ethereal for imitation; which once lost can never be regained; which is as far from prudishness as it is from immodesty; which a bad man hates and can not understand; which to a good man makes woman like an angel. This need not be lost in the unveiled freedom of wedded intimacy. The wife does indeed give all to her husband; but in that high and holy abandonment, not one grace that made up the pure beauty of her maiden life need be lost. No right-minded man would wish it otherwise; he sees and feels

its sweet power as fully as ever; nay, it has a deeper hold upon him now, and shines with a calmer, steadier radiance; its magnetic influence reaches out, attracting him to her side, and all the more because the soul of whose beauty he is thus ever catching glimpses, is his alone."*

Among these potent influences over a husband's affections is that of personal attractiveness. Nature has endowed woman with a powerful intuition in this direction, one that is exceedingly liable to become excessive in its action, but one which is in danger of becoming weak and inoperative during married life. Women instinctively love to be beautiful, and have a natural drawing toward those things which will add to their personal appearance and charms. And this is an instinct of nature, wise and good in itself, only to be condemned when it becomes excessive and extravagant. Cleanliness of person and neatness and attractiveness of dress as much belong to a true woman as the softness and delicacy of complexion and modesty of spirit which nature has given to her. And most men, with here and there a coarse exception, feel the power of this

*Aikman.

personal purity and neatness, and are gratified when they are able to provide the means for securing it to their wives and children. So natural and so strong is the admiration of men for this personal attractiveness in women that they are just as liable to become extravagant in furnishing means for its gratification as women are in indulging it. On extravagance we shall have a word to say hereafter. What we wish to say now is that it is evident that this personal attractiveness is one of the strong links between husband and wife, that it will not be overlooked by the true wife, and that it can be secured without extravagance. Indeed, a part of its charm in the wife is that it is not excessive, that the husband sees at once that her womanly taste and ingenuity has brought it about for his sake, without going beyond his income and ability. There is power in these little things, and a wise woman understands them. She knows that there is a difference in the feeling which a man has in meeting a wife in a slovenly, neglected condition, and in coming home to one whose neatness silently, but most eloquently, tells her husband how much she values his approbation, and how highly she

respects his love. And yet there are times and circumstances when the wife must be about other duties than those of personal adornment. A wife can not and need not always be in fine array, and the true rule is for the wife to study and manifest the spirit of order and neatness, and the husband to excuse impossibilities and necessities, while he gladly accepts the tribute which the wife's spirit of neatness pays to his love.

Intimately connected with the personal attractiveness of the wife is the maintenance of moral and mental equality with her husband. Often this is not an easy problem for the wife to solve. Her life is necessarily a more secluded one than that of the husband, and is ordinarily more filled with cares and anxieties, the thousand little things necessary for preserving the order and well-being of the home demanding almost the constant attention and time of the wife. Nor are these domestic matters of much value in aiding in mental discipline and culture. On the contrary, quite an ordinary, commonplace man, by his daily intercourse with the world, by contact with other men, by conversation, and by the attritions of trade and business,

really finds quite a school for mental culture in his every-day life; while the man who is already a scholar, and pursues a professional life, by his very occupation is constantly enlarging in information and culture. Yet these two persons, the active, busy man, constantly sharpening in his wits and enlarging in his knowledge, and the secluded wife, occupied with a thousand little cares that rather tend to mental worriment than mental culture, must keep within speaking distance. We say *must*, for domestic happiness is impossible with the existence of great disparity between husband and wife. And yet the problem is not so difficult of solution if both husband and wife will set themselves about it.

In the first place, nature comes to the help of the wife in this respect. Her nature is the more susceptible, and is more subject to the law of assimilation than that of the husband; the wife grows as he grows, and in comparative development she is generally found side by side with him; she goes up in society as he goes, and is generally found as ready to grace any position in which his success places her as he is himself. This has come about through their

mutual intercourse, through their conversation, through their consultations on plans and purposes, through that beautiful and powerful law of assimilation by which persons, and especially persons of opposite sex, grow into likeness of character, and often even of person. The husband that would have his wife a good companion for himself must give enough of himself to her to bring about this assimilation; he must be with her, converse with her, talk of their plans and aims together, treat her as a partner in his life and purposes, and he will find she is growing as fast as himself. If he would have a genial companion in his wife, he must, as far as possible, secure to her the time and means for mental culture; he must raise from her, as much as possible, the burden of care and toil; he must bring into the house books, papers, pictures, and many other things that both make the home more beautiful and all who live in it more cultured.

But the wife, too, must see the importance of this equality with her husband, and must determine to attain it and maintain it. She must insist upon devoting a part of her time to this direct end, mental improvement. A wife

needs not be a blue-stocking; they are not usually the wives in whom men are very happy; literature is a calling; it is all right for women who have the call to pursue it, but it is no more every wife's duty to be a litterateur than it is for every husband to pursue a learned profession. But what every true wife ought to aim at is to have her mind fairly cultivated, abreast with the knowledge of the day, and active enough to meet responsively the approaches of another active and intelligent mind. It is astonishing how much reading, not merely of novels and fiction, full of nonsense and emptiness, but good, useful, solid reading, can be accomplished by a very busy housewife and a faithful mother with many little ones around her. Have a good book always at hand, and you will be surprised to find how many opportunities present themselves in spare moments to read it, and will be still more surprised to find at the end of a year how much you have read, and what mental strength and elasticity you have acquired. And in this day the wife finds a great friend and helper in the daily paper, and in the really valuable periodicals into which so much knowledge is condensed into a small space. Those

were beautiful and true words of Madame de Maintenon to the Princess of Savoy on the eve of her marriage: "Neglect not to make your mind a fit companion for him whose companion you are to be through life. Personal charms may please for a moment, but the more lasting beauties of an improved understanding can never tire. We are soon weary of looking at a picture, though executed in a masterly style, and she who has only beauty to recommend her has but little chance of meeting a lover who will not grow indifferent to a mere portrait, particularly when its colors are faded by the subduing hand of time. Then it is that modesty and sweetness of temper are particularly observed, and the loss of beauty will not be regretted by the man it first made your captive."

It is impossible to meet the responsibilities of wifehood without industry and economy. The true wife "looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness." If it is the husband's duty to provide for his household, it is as much the wife's duty to use his resources with economy and prudence. If she is under no obligation to economize at home, he is under no obligation to be

diligent abroad. If she may be wasteful and extravagant in the family, he may be idle and reckless in business. Nor is mere economy and prudence the measure of a wife's duty here. The true wife can not be an idle woman. God made both men and women to work; and this is not a curse for sin, but is a duty devolved upon them while they were yet in the innocence of Eden. Well would it be for many sickly, nervous, fretful wives, if they had something to do, and were under the necessity of doing it. We have a serious fault in American society in this respect. How strange it is that in this land where the highest honor is placed on labor, and he is the true man who raises himself and builds his own fortune, labor on the part of women should be considered degrading, and especially that kind of labor which is peculiarly in the province of women, the care of the home! Even where the mother, born before these new notions became prevalent, and true to the traditions of her youth, condescends to labor occasionally, the daughters are frequently brought up in perfect idleness, take no bodily exercise except that of walking in fine weather, or riding in cushioned carriages. Domestic

industry is too much out of fashion among modern wives—too much for real domestic happiness and comfort, too much for health of mind and body. Those who can afford servants can not bemean themselves, as they think, by domestic labors. The result is, too frequently, that ladies of this class lose what little health they started life with, becoming feeble in just about the same proportion as they become fashionable.

In this neglect of household cares American ladies stand alone. A German lady, no matter how elevated her rank, never forgets that domestic labors conduce to the health of mind and body alike. An English lady, whatever may be her position in society, does not neglect the affairs of her household, and even though she has a housekeeper, devotes a portion of her time to this, which she considers her imperative wifely duty. The queen herself is one of the most careful housewives and industrious women of her realm. A contrary course to this results in that lassitude and ennui of mind, and languor of body which is fatal to domestic cheerfulness and happiness; the wife either withers away in ill health, or rushes into all

sorts of fashionable follies to find employment for her mind. Home employment, too, is the most effectual antidote to those besetting sins of backbiting, enviousness, and gossiping. Yet, wherever it is practicable, the husband will find it greatly to his interest and happiness, not to allow these household cares to multiply upon his wife until they become a drudgery, and she that should be his companion becomes merely his housekeeper. Give her timely help and relief; lift the burden the moment you see it bearing too heavily on mind or body; just as soon as your means will admit of it—and that will be long before you have accumulated what you would call your fortune—let her office and work be that of superintendent of home, as yours is that of superintendent of your business. You will be paid for all this in what is better than money, roseate health, cheerful spirits, a happy and lovable wife.

We must insist on the old-fashioned claim, that it is the wife's duty to be good-natured at home. It may be exceedingly difficult to maintain this at all times, but it is essential; the absence of it is fatal to the peace and happiness of the family; it is the vital breath of the house-

hold. To achieve it rests mainly on the wife, because the home is peculiarly hers. So Solomon describes an ideal wife: "She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue is the law of kindness." No trait of character is more valuable in a wife than this: it is like the flowers that spring up in our pathway, reviving and cheering us. Let a man go home at night, wearied and worn out by the toils of the day, and how soothing is a word dictated by a sweet disposition! It is as sunshine shining on his heart. He is happy and the cares of life are forgotten. A sweet temper has a soothing influence over the mind of the whole family. When it is found in the wife and mother, you find kindness and love predominating over the natural feelings of all in the house. Smiles, kind words and looks characterize the children, and peace and love have their dwelling in that home. Few women are aware of the powerful influence of their words of gentleness, kindness, and encouragement over men. In many points these great, strong men are weaker than you; they have less patience, less endurance than you; they are more easily discouraged than you. Your smile and approbation, your gentle

words and encouragement come to them like an inspiration. When your husband goes forth to the toils of the day, your smile and blessing are a far better stimulant than any bar-room or saloon can furnish him; and when he returns from the cares of the world, let him find repose and affection at home, and in its genial sunshine he will forget the storm without. Above all, a wife should be exceedingly careful in ministering blame and complaints with regard to his business, and murmurings that he is not more successful. Most likely he is doing the very best he can; man's ambition to succeed is intense enough without any goading from his wife. His failures, his want of success, his embarrassments, his limited circumstances are stinging enough to him, and should never receive upbraidings from his wife.

But we must conclude this article with a glance at the wife in her relation of mother. Here she stands pre-eminent in her power to impress her own character, whether good or evil, on her children, and through them on society at large. Nor is this all; these little ones, like living links, connect her with the distant future, and through them, as through electric

wires fastened to her heart and it the living battery, she may send her influence like a living stream far into the future. How powerful, then, is the influence of the mother! How deep, how early, how enduring her impressions on the youthful mind! What nobler or more important province of activity could possibly fall to the lot of human beings? Shame, shame on those women who, in their mad seeking after meaner things, would cast from them this sublime office and work! It is the mother's power not only to bless the little ones at her feet, so that they arise and call her blessed, but the future men and women, husbands and wives, fathers and mothers of the world, first nestle in her bosom, and play around her feet, while she in every look, in every utterance, in every lesson, molds their character, and daguerreotypes upon them impressions which will last forever. This is not fancy, nor is it exaggeration. The mother re-lives in the heart and life of her children. Cowper lost his mother in early life, when yet a little feeble inmate of the nursery, and yet that mother's image, her voice, her kindness, her lessons, were enstamped on his soul. Long years passed by, and Cowper grew to be

a man; in the full strength of his genius and manhood, hear his address to his spirit-mother. The whole of it is one of the most beautiful productions in the English language; we can quote only that part of it which bears on the point before us:

"Where once we dwelt our name is heard no more;
Children not thine have trod the nursery floor;
And where the gardener, Robin, day by day,
Drew me to school along the public way,
Delighted with my bauble coach, and wrapp'd
In scarlet mantle warm, and velvet cap,
'T is now become a history little known,
That once we called the pastoral house our own.
Short-lived possession! but the record fair,
That memory keeps of all thy kindness there,
Still outlives many a storm that has effaced
A thousand other themes less deeply traced—
Thy nightly visits to my chamber made,
That thou might'st know me safe and warmly laid;
Thy morning bounties ere I left my home,
The biscuit or confectionery plum;
The fragrant waters on my cheek bestowed
By thine own hand, till fresh they shone and glowed;
All this, and more endearing still than all,
Thy constant flow of love that knew no fall.
. . . . . .
All this, still legible in memory's page,
And still to be so till my latest age,
Adds joy to duty, makes me glad to pay
Such honors to thee, as my numbers may."

Nor is it only these memories that live in the growing heart of childhood. Pious lessons, elements of truth, principles of religion and

morality, are all like seeds sown in a fertile soil, which must and will germinate and grow in the future. The devout Richard Cecil thus records his experience: "Nothing used to impress upon my mind so strongly the reality and excellence of religion as my mother's counsels and prayers. Frequently she retired with her children to a private room, and, after she had read the Bible with us and given us some good instruction and advice, she kneeled down with us and offered a prayer, which, for apparent earnestness and fervor, I have seldom known equaled. These seasons were always pleasant to us, and sometimes we looked forward to them with impatience. My mother seemed to me then almost an angel, her language, her manner, the very expression of her countenance indicating great nearness to the throne of grace. I could not have shown levity at such times; it would have been impossible. I felt then it was a great blessing to have a praying mother, and I have felt it much more sensibly since. Those prayers and counsels time will never efface from my memory. They form, as it were, a part of my very constitution."

Here, then, is a vast sphere of usefulness

and activity for the Christian wife and mother, and, though the husband and father is to be her helpmeet here, and may not transfer his parental responsibility and duty to the wife, but should ever co-operate with her in this momentous work, yet her position here is supreme, and it is pre-eminently her work to train her children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

VIII.

PARENTS.

A SAD and portentous phenomenon has presented itself in our day which we can scarcely designate by any other title than a revolt against childhood; perhaps it would not be badly named as a protest against the Creator. How strange that this abomination should originate in Christendom! With the ancient Jew children were esteemed "a heritage from the Lord;" with pagans they are counted among their greatest treasures; the saddest calamity of their life is to be childless. True, sometimes they will cast them into some sacred river, or immolate them on some idol shrine, but this is not because they hate them, or wish to be rid of them, but because they would devote them as their choicest gifts to their gods. It remained for Christian civilization to bring forth this deliberate protest against motherhood, this cool determination to thwart the

purposes and arrangements of the Creator, this insane outcry against the cares and responsibilities of parenthood. Though born in Christendom, it surely is not of Christianity. It is an offspring of that common and wide-spread revolt against the ordinances of God which would wholly set aside Christianity and the Bible, which would reduce marriage itself to mere licensed sensuality, and which finds in the wholesome restraints of God's ordinances and institutions hateful barriers in the way of its unlimited licentiousness. The Divine founder of Christianity set to his seal of imperishable protest against the abominable spirit when he called the little children to himself and blessed them, and claimed them for his kingdom on earth and in heaven.

We do not design here to enter into a discussion of this modern abomination, but only to introduce what we have to say on the parental relation and its obligations, with a protest against the fearful evil, and to say to those who read these pages, turn away from it as you would from a visible manifestation of Satan himself. Depend upon it, it is only fraught with evil; the displeasure of God is upon it, and his curse

will rest on that family where the abominations it leads to are practiced. If it is not the spirit of murder, it is so near to it that no man or woman can honestly draw the line of distinction; and so near does it lie to the domain of positive crime, that the shadow of God's penalties for sin falls upon it, and produces blighting and a curse wherever it is found. If you do not wish the cares and responsibilities of a parent, do not marry; but woe be to that husband and wife who try the experiment of snatching from Nature the sweets of one of her most beautiful institutions while crushing beneath their feet its proper fruits! Nature will take her revenge most fearfully on soul and body, and the God of nature will make his displeasure felt in that home.

We know there are great cares and responsibilities connected with the parental relation; we know that these cares fall with special weight on the mother; we know that in order to meet them she, especially, must make many sacrifices and self-denials; we know that the childless wife can live a more easy, gay, fashionable life; and yet we know the invariable order of God that responsibilities well met, and duties

faithfully performed, and cares patiently borne, bring the highest blessings and joys we can receive in this life; we know that the blessedness of that mother who, even at the cost of her own self-sacrifices, has reared sons and daughters for God and for humanity, infinitely transcends all the mere pleasure that may be crowded into an easy, frivolous, fashionable life, and that in doing so she has filled as high and holy an office and service as falls to the lot of mortals here below.

But why should we look on the parental relation as a burden, and see in the sacred duties which it involves only a grievous weight of responsibility? Is it not one of the sublimest mysteries of our human life? Is not the relation one of the most pure, and dear, and holy on earth? Are not the opportunities which it furnishes for impressing ourselves on other beings, for molding and training them for honor and virtue, among the grandest opportunities of our life? Is it not a delightful work to be permitted to train these young immortal plants for a place in the garden of the Lord?—to polish these living gems to be set in the diadem of the Redeemer? Surely it is a beautiful,

rather than a burdensome arrangement, that these young, expanding, priceless, and impressible minds are committed to our charge, and that to us has been given the sublime work of educating and developing them for immortality and a glorious life. How the thought ennobles the parental relation! What sanctity and significance does it impart to the Christian family! How do these immortal offshoots from our own existence rise in our estimation of their worth, and grow in the depth and earnestness of our love, while even in their beautiful and helpless childhood they present themselves to us as beings whose interests and destinies are worthy of our life's devotion! A young immortal plays around our feet—a budding moral being blooms in our household; such is its relation to us, and such its nature, and such the means which our merciful Father has provided for our use, that we may direct its opening life, unfold its budding being, and lead each expanding faculty toward God and heaven. We may stamp divine things on its young heart; we may write lessons of heavenly wisdom on its opening mind; we may intermingle streams of sacred influences with the current of its flowing life; we may make

impressions upon its expanding nature that shall endure forever. Say, are not such powers as these gracious gifts, rather than burdensome obligations?—such a labor as this, a beautiful privilege, rather than an onerous task? Should we not gladly turn to it as a delightful life-labor, rather than strive to evade it as a grievous life-burden?

In the light of such thoughts we purpose to study some of the duties and responsibilities of parents. And, first, let us call attention to the parent's responsibility for the irresponsible child.

The child itself, during the age of immaturity, is obviously irresponsible; its circumstances forbid that it should be held accountable for its thoughts and actions; and yet it is a moral being. Its irresponsibility is far different from that of a mere animal, because its nature and its actions are far different from those of a mere animal. Young and ignorant as it is, it is still a moral and immortal being—moral because there is in its nature the germ of a moral character, which must necessarily be developed in the future, and immortal because it is moral. Its relations to the future, as a moral being in em-

bryo, are vast and important. If it live, it must grow up into the responsible and accountable man—must, by the necessity of its nature and by the circumstances of its life, enter upon a probationary state which involves its immortal destiny. Yet the child is unconscious of its own moral nature, and ignorant of all these responsibilities and relations in the future, and is itself incapacitated for making preparations for entering upon that fearful stage of probation. Not so, however, with the parents. They are aware of the moral and immortal nature of the child, and see the important relations which it bears to the future, and they are capacitated to train and fit that young immortal for entering most advantageously upon its future probation.

It can not be otherwise, than that, during the irresponsibility and ignorance of the child, the parents are held responsible for the knowledge which they thus possess, and accountable for the culture of the child, they being alone competent to bring it up under the most favorable circumstances to enter upon its own responsibility. What parent does not feel that he is the guardian and protector of the *physical* life of his child? that during its early exist-

ence, while ignorant of the nature of things about it, of the laws of its own life, of the injurious and morbid influences by which it is surrounded, of the means of avoiding dangers, escaping diseases, preserving health and prolonging life, his knowledge of all these circumstances is to be made available to the thoughtless and ignorant child, and that on him devolves the duty of securing to his helpless offspring those circumstances which give the greatest promise of preserving its health and prolonging its life? And is it not equally obvious that the parent is constituted the guardian and protector of the *moral* nature of his offspring? During its early existence—its age of imbecility and ignorance—must not his knowledge of the child's moral nature, of its future relations and responsibilities, of the laws of its moral life, and of the moral dangers and diseases which threaten it, be made available to the child, and must not he preserve it from all dangerous exposure, and from all morbid influences, and secure for it the most favorable circumstances for the unfolding and strengthening of its moral life?

A very erroneous conception of the nature of childhood and of parental responsibility, is

that which compares the child to the rough marble in the quarry, which may or may not be chiseled into forms of beauty. The analogy holds good in only a single point. The artist may bring forth the rough block from the quarry, and his chisel may reveal what forms of beauty the marble may be made to assume; and so may moral and intellectual culture develop the innate capacities of childhood, and reveal to us the beautiful moral and intellectual forms the growing child may be made to assume. But in all things else how poor the comparison—how faint the analogy! In the one case we have an aggregation of particles, crystallized into shape, without organism, life, or motion. In the other we have life, growth, expansion. In the first, we have a mass of limestone, neither more nor less than insensate matter, utterly incapable of any alteration from within itself. In the second, we have a living body, a mind, affections instinct with power, gifted with vitality, and forming the attributes of a being allied to and only a little lower than the angels. These constitute a life which, by its inherent force, must grow and unfold itself by a law of its own, whether you educate it or not. Some

development *it will make*, some form *it will assume*, by its own irrepressible and spontaneous action. The question, with us, is rather what that form shall be; whether it shall wear the visible robes of an immortal, with a countenance glowing with the intelligence and pure affection of cherub and seraph, or, through the rags and sensual impress of an earthly life, send forth only occasional gleams of its higher nature. The great work of all education, moral and intellectual, is to stimulate and direct this native power of moral and intellectual growth. God and the subject co-working effect all the rest.

But let us look again at the very intimate physical and moral relation which God has established between the parent and child. It is an axiom among us that the child must partake of the nature of its parents both physically and morally. We expect to find the lineaments of the parents impressed upon their offspring, and the child partaking of the constitution of its parents. We even cast the chances of its life and health on the constitution of those who gave it being. Vigorous and healthful parents generally have vigorous and healthful children;

the insane, the epileptic, the consumptive parent impresses strong tendencies to the same evils on the constitution of his offspring; the drunken and licentious father, whose debauches ruin his own constitution, entails a ruined constitution upon his child. Nor is the moral relation between parents and children less striking than the physical. The parent who neglects his duty to God, and gives himself up to wickedness—who develops, by indulgence and practice, the corrupt passions and appetites of his nature, and especially who gives himself over to the graver vices, must expect to stamp a corresponding character upon his offspring; and that not only by the influence of his example, but by the transmission of the tendencies of his own moral character to the child. The drunken and licentious parent will be very likely to have drunken and licentious children; and that for two very powerful reasons—he will certainly entail upon them a strong bent of the nature toward those vices, which will prove sources of temptation to them through their whole life, and the influence of his example on natures already bent toward his own vices, constitutes a temptation of which there is but little

hope of successful resistance. On the other hand, the pious, temperate, and God-fearing parent transmits to his offspring the better tendencies of his own moral character. That "a good tree can not bring forth evil fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit," and "of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble-bush gather they grapes," are axiomatic principles as true here as in other spheres of morals.

But God has shown us this intimate connection on a scale of fearful magnitude, in the moral corruption of an entire race from the moral corruption of apostate parents. The question is often asked why the corruption and mortality of Adam are made to fall upon us, who had personally no part in his transgression? The answer is found in this simple principle: It could not be otherwise and we be his children. By the laws of life he must entail his own nature on his children, and this, as far as we can see, could only have been averted by such a modification in the laws of life as would have destroyed any such relation as that of parent and child.

Who, then, does not see the great weight of

responsibility that is thus stamped upon the parents of the child? God, by the laws of life, by the nature of childhood, and by its relations to the future, has almost wholly left it with the parents to say in what state, and with what advantages or disadvantages, the child shall grow up and enter upon its own responsibility and probation. We see thus to what a vast extent God has suspended the physical and temporal, and the moral and eternal interests of the irresponsible child on the responsible parent; and we learn, too, what he means, as well as the truth of the declaration, when he declares he will visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation.

We thus have contemplated the responsibility of the parents for the child as a preliminary consideration enforcing the duties of parents. Parents have duties, imperative and unavoidable, because they are the responsible representatives of the child. And here, too, we may properly recall to mind as a second preliminary consideration, the nature and relations of the child as presented in the Word of God. It is a moral and immortal being which God has

embraced in the great atonement of his Son, and whom he has morally and legally qualified for admission into his Church and kingdom; as such he has placed it in the hands of its parents, holding them responsible for the care and culture of one of his lambs, and accountable for their dealings with one of his children. There is a twofold and fearful responsibility resting upon parents, and they can not evade it—a responsibility which involves them in stamping the very character of their children, and a responsibility which makes them the keepers of young immortal members of the kingdom of Christ. What folly, then, to suppose that responsibilities like these, interwoven into the very texture of our lives, and springing up from the very moral being of our children, can be thrown aside and evaded!

But to the duties:

1. *It is the duty of parents to consecrate themselves to the service of God.*

From what we have already seen, obviously the highest interests of our children can only be reached by parents themselves becoming the servants of God. Children are only born under the most favorable circumstances when

they are born of Christian parents; their very moral nature, at least in its tendencies, is the better of it, and the holy, God-fearing father, and the pious, meek, and devoted mother, stamp their character on their offspring and send them forth into the world freed from a hundred evil influences which they would inherit from ungodly, worldly, and wicked parents.

But, let our opinions be as they may with reference to what we have just advanced, certainly we will all agree that the highest moral interests of the child can only be met in the religious example and godly precepts of pious parents. Thrice blessed is that child who is born of sincere Christian parents, and who is reared under the preserving and refining influences of godly precepts and examples. Unhappy indeed is that child who is born of wicked and ungodly parents, or even of heartless and godless worldlings, and who is destined to be reared under the influence of vice and wickedness, or to grow up in the tainted atmosphere of pride and worldliness. Both are alike moral and immortal beings, and whether breathing the pure air of a heavenly household, or living in the polluted atmosphere of vice, or the no

less hazardous influences of parental pride and heartlessness, all alike must grow up into maturity to enter upon a stage of personal responsibility and individual probation. But how differently will these young immortals, born and reared under such different circumstances, enter upon this important stage of life! The child of godly parents enters upon it under the most favorable circumstances—with a nature softened and subdued, and already more than half Christianized by holy examples exhibited in the lives of those most endeared to it, and a mind religiously cultivated and thoroughly imbued with the principles of godliness, a memory stored with Gospel truth, a judgment disciplined in right and wrong, a conscience educated and Christianized, it is ready — thoroughly furnished—to emerge from childhood into manhood—to pass out of the state of irresponsible youth into that of a great moral and accountable being.

Not so with children of wicked and worldly parents. Deprived of the influence of godly precept and example, and positively tainted by the influence of constant exhibitions of vice and worldliness; with natures untamed and un-

disciplined; minds ignorant of Christian truth; judgments warped and obscured; consciences seared and callous; principles and habits of vice and worldliness already formed and confirmed; what fitness is there in such beings to enter upon the fearful stage of life through which they must pass?

How justly may we conclude, then, that the first great duty of parents toward the child is personal consecration to God! And what an appeal should these considerations make to the heart of the parents! If reckless of their own interests—if indifferent about their own salvation—if willing to hazard their own eternal interests for a life of sin, and pleasure, and worldliness, let them remember that they are involving others in their ruin, and are sacrificing on the altar of their own pleasure and gratification the immortal interests of those most dear to them. If they proudly assert themselves to have the right to hazard their own salvation, let them stop to ask whether they have also the right to imperil the salvation of those immortal buds to whom they have given life. Let every parent remember that God has so constituted it, and by no possibility can he evade it, that in deter-

mining the course of life which he will pursue, the interests of others besides himself are vastly involved in his decisions, and if he is prepared to risk and sacrifice his own immortal interests, he must also answer the question whether he is prepared and has the right to sacrifice theirs.

2. *It is the duty of parents to consecrate their children to God.*

When the eye of the parent glances with tenderness upon his offspring, and his thought runs forward into the future of his child, with what complacency does he mingle with the hopes of that future, the provisions which Divine love has made for his children! and when death enters the loved circle of his household and removes a lamb from the flock, what thought so consoling to the stricken heart, as the truth that a glorious provision has been made for the immortality of his child! But shall we build upon these Gospel provisions our hopes and exultations, and draw from them in the hour of bereavement and sorrow our sweetest consolation, and yet fail to recognize the practical duty which devolves upon us, and which springs from these merciful provisions? Provisions of such magnitude made for our chil-

dren involve duties of the highest importance. The promise being made to us and to our children, is not merely a benevolent extension of the Gospel provision to gratify the parental emotions of our hearts, but to constitute the basis of a grave parental duty. If God has opened the door of his Church for their reception, it is not that parents may admire his far-reaching mercy, but that they may bring them in. If the Savior has opened his arms, and commanded his disciples to suffer the little ones to come unto him, it was not merely to give us an exhibition of his tender sympathy, but that he might lay upon us the obligation of bringing them to Christ. And if a full and free salvation has been provided for them by linking them in a vital union with the dying Lamb of God, it is not simply to relieve the sorrows of the bereaved hearts of parents, but to inspire in them a realization of the true nature and worth of childhood, and to lay upon parents the duty of connecting them with the visible kingdom of heaven on earth, as emblematical of their title to the kingdom of heaven on high.

With such provisions made for the earthly

and the heavenly welfare of our children, with what thankfulness should we avail ourselves of them, and how gladly should we bring them to the arms of Christ and consecrate them to him! Few sights to us are more beautiful than the devout and conscientious consecration of children to God in the impressive ordinance of baptism, when in the parents' minds it is not a mere unmeaning ceremony, but is a giving of the child to God and a covenanting on their part to bring it up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

3. *It is the duty of parents to give to their children the most careful moral culture and discipline.*

The consecration of children to God in the beautiful act of baptism implies this subsequent religious culture and discipline. But parenthood itself implies it, and it can not be evaded, as some very silly people think, by refusing to consecrate their children to Christ. You are a parent; that settles all; *therefore* it is your duty to give the most careful religious culture to your children. You have been the means of bringing young immortal beings into life; *therefore* it is your duty to train them for God and eternity.

Into the details of the mode of this moral training we can not enter here. We shall only indicate some of the prominent features of such a course.

1. And first of all, let parents "*first learn to show piety at home.*" If our Savior has wisely given us an injunction "to let our light shine before men, that they seeing our good works *may glorify our Father which is in heaven*," with how much additional force and promise of success will it apply to the wants and interests of our households! In the language of one who in his brief life did much for the development of domestic piety, and who, as men would say, died too soon, "Be deeply pious yourself—let your own soul be thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the Gospel. Then will you present a living image of the beauty and excellence of Christianity before your children. Then will you be inflexibly just in your dealings, upright in conversation, humane toward the suffering, and walk humbly with God. Then will you be solemn and dignified, cheerful and courteous. Then will the law of kindness be on your tongue—meekness and modesty will adorn your demeanor—joy will light up your coun-

tenance—peace and heavenly tranquillity will sit undisturbed upon your brow. Your religion will be heard in the tones of your voice, seen in every feature of your face, blended with all your acts. Then will you act under a lively impression of the presence of a holy God, and your reproofs, corrections, warnings, counsels, and expostulations, will, *by their very manner*, make your children feel that God is near. Then will you be faithful in the duties of family religion. Your warm and overflowing gratitude, your child-like confidence, your earnest entreaties, your heart-felt adoration in family prayer, will make such an impression on the minds of your children of God's being and presence, of his goodness and mercy, of his adorable perfections, and of the reality of his manifesting himself to his children 'as he does not to the world,' as is unlikely to be made by a thousand cold and formal doctrinal lessons which fail to reach the heart.

"If, on the other hand, you yourself either neglect religion, or have only the form, your neglect, or your cold and formal method of speaking on the subject, and your lifeless prayers, may establish the conviction in the

minds of your children that it is but a mass of speculative notions and idle ceremonies."

2. *We should give regular and systematic instruction to our children at home.*

Parents should feel the duty resting upon them in their individual responsibilities to impart to their children the deep lessons of piety, truth, and morality. This is a duty which can not be wholly committed to the hands of others. Parents are the proper and most efficient moral educators of their own children, and into their hands is given this sacred trust for which the God of the universe will call them to an account. There may be many others much more capable than we of leading them through the various processes of mental discipline and education, but unto us has been emphatically committed the beautiful work of leading our children to seek those unfading joys which come from God only, and for this work no one else is so competent or so favorably situated as are we. "And *thou* shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and *thou* shalt talk of them when *thou sittest in thine house;* and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

Let us urge this upon parents as a personal duty. In too many instances we attempt to evade it by committing it to the hands of others. Our children are sent to the Sabbath-school and are brought to the Church, and the consciences of many parents rest easy under the conviction that their children are being trained in the nurture of the Lord. The Sabbath-school is a beautiful institution, and an essential adjunct to the Christian Church. It has proved a blessing to thousands of the children of Christian parents, but especially has it proved a blessing by bringing together the children of irreligious parents, and instructing them in the path of life. But if it is made to supply the place of home instruction, and the children of professors of religion are cast upon it to receive that religious education which should have been given at home, it has passed beyond its true province, and becomes an evil instead of a blessing. No, mother, you especially are to be the preceptor of your child, teaching it the way to God and heaven. This is your highest calling—your noblest mission. Fulfill it well, and you will have accomplished something worthy of your life. Train that young

plant for God. It is a tender exotic, whose native clime is heaven. Believe us, it is worthy of your most careful culture, and will grow into an immortal and fruitful plant to gladden your heart forever. Yet beautiful as it is, it is still but the creature of a day, "passing as the arrow through the air—a spirit from God and returning to him—just hovering over the great gulf till a few moments hence it shall be no more, but drop into an unchangeable eternity. One thing it needs to know—the way to heaven—how to reach safely that eternal abode. God himself has condescended to teach the way. For this very end he came from heaven. He has written it down in a book—O, give them the lessons of that book! At any price give them the book of God!" If you have not time, make time. Sacrifice any thing else; but on the altar of a busy, bustling, worldly life, sacrifice not the immortal interests of these tender buddings of your own existence.

Teach them the Bible; adapt its lessons to the wants of their young minds; unfold to them its wonderful doctrines as they are able to appreciate them; familiarize them with its beautiful examples; instruct them in the demands of

its pure morality; reiterate to them the story of redeeming love; open up before them as soon as practicable the vitality and spirituality of the Christian life; examine their young hearts, and be prepared to meet and foster the first buddings of a religious experience; introduce them into the Sabbath-school; bring them with you to the house of God; draw them to your side on the calm and holy Sabbath, yea, if possible, on each day, at the solemn sunset when the world is being hushed to silence and rest, and breathe on them a parent's blessing, and drop into their young and impressible hearts these lessons of heavenly instruction; once there they will remain forever.

Talk with your children about religion. Not in dry and formal lectures, lest you surfeit them, but with the familiarity, the tender interest, and the gentleness of a mother—with the affectionate solicitude of an earnest and believing father Believe it, they will not tire of these lessons, nor dread the recurrence of these tender and affectionate conversations. They see in it a new evidence of your love; it is an admission of them into your society and tender familiarity, than which nothing is more dear to your chil-

dren, and they will meet you more than half-way in these kind and beautiful advances.

Forget not to pray with them and for them. Not only erect the family altar and bring them with you to the family devotions, but take them with you to the secret chamber and pray with them alone. Commend them there to God, and there implore his heavenly benedictions upon them. How mighty must be the influence of such an exercise on the impressible heart of childhood!

Set before them good examples, and throw around them pure and gracious influences. Our children are mirrors, living mirrors, which not only catch up the image of every object and event that comes before them, but by virtue of their vitality they retain them all. Every faculty of their young nature is an absorbent, which eagerly drinks in and appropriates to its growth and development every thing that comes before it. Let home, then, be a domestic sanctuary, redolent with heavenly influences. Let its society, its conversations, its amusements, its ornaments, and its books be refined and pure. It is due to them that they should be surrounded by these healthful religious influences.

As the guardians of their moral nature, it is our duty to provide these circumstances for their moral wants, with even a greater weight of obligation than we feel incumbent upon us the duty of providing for their physical necessities. Indeed, what avails the most ardent affection which reaches only to the mortal part, if we neglect the moral and immortal, and if all that lies in our power is not done, that after their passage through the present short-lived scene of things, they may enter into eternity in the favor of God?

3. In addition to these positive efforts to give to our children a religious culture, it is also a duty to withhold them from all evil examples and influences; to keep them from such amusements, such scenes, such company, such books, as are calculated to corrupt their minds, lead them into bad habits, inspire worldly-mindedness, and diminish and finally destroy their love and reverence for sacred and divine things. It is our duty to exercise here the authority of accountable parents, and not to yield to the choice and solicitations of our young, and inexperienced, and thoughtless children. From the age, the superior knowledge, the experience, and the

relation of parents, it is their right, nay, their duty to prescribe what shall be the amusements, the company, the books, and the habits of their thoughtless child. The thin, clear ice that covers over that river is beautiful; its glassy smoothness is inviting to your child—so level, so smooth, so clear, he would leap upon it as a new and beautiful play-ground; unconscious of the flowing death that lurks beneath it, he solicits your consent. Will you give it? Rather, do you not feel that it is your right and your duty positively to prohibit it? The gay and beautiful world, with its giddy round of pleasures, with its ever-shifting fashions, with its painted and gilded vices, with its ornamented saloons, its dancing-schools, its ball-rooms, its theaters, its billiard, nine-pin, gambling, and drinking saloons, its free and easy life, its fashionable customs, its light, exciting, trashy literature, presents a very captivating appearance to your son and daughter. It is beautiful—they would love to mingle with its scenes; it seems happy—they would love to participate in its pleasures; it looks innocent—why may they not plunge into it; they are young—why should they not be free and happy? Unconscious of

the moral death that is here covered over, gilded and kept out of sight, they solicit your permission. Dare you give it? Rather, do you not feel it your right, and your duty, positively to prohibit it?

Alas, how many professing Christians yield to these solicitations! How many, though they will not give direct permission, yet fail to prohibit, and look on and see their children step by step advancing into the swift circles of the fearful whirlpool of a worldly life! A dreadful experiment is tried by many unthinking parents with their children—that of allowing them first to become thoroughly imbued with the principles of a worldly life, to become estranged from the house of God and from sacred and divine things, to enter freely and largely into the follies, fashions, and vices of the world, to form sinful habits, to imbibe dangerous lessons and principles, to become attached to wicked and worldly companions—with the deceptive hope that in maturer years they themselves will see the folly of such a life, will be awakened to a consciousness of their need of religion, will be suddenly arrested by some powerful religious influence, be made penitent and be converted, and thus

wipe out all the past, and remedy by a few penitent tears the evils of a life, and the faults of careless and negligent parents. Dreadful, dreadful experiment—always involving loss, in countless instances proving fatal!

What would we think of that parent who would stand on the borders of the hollow, whirling maelstrom, and with a single thread around the body of his child, would toss him out farther and still farther from his arms, into the sweep of the circles of that fearful whirlpool, with the mad hope that before he is finally drawn into its yawning vortex, he will draw him back again to his bosom? But do you act a wiser and less hazardous part, O parent, when you toss these lambs of your bosom out upon the boiling, surging, ingulfing ocean of the world, with the mad hope that ere it finally overwhelms them and drinks them down to its fathomless depths, some power will seize them and bring them back again to your arms? It is madness. If you love them, venture no such experiment. If you would save them, save them while they are yet young, innocent, and impressible at your feet.

IX.

CONCERNING DIVORCE.

THAT there are very powerful forces at work in modern society threatening to produce great changes in our social life none can deny. Whether these forces are working good or evil, and whether these changes will be for the better or the worse eventually, are questions which would awaken debate, and would be decided differently as they are received by different minds and studied from different standpoints. By some they would all be generalized under the term *progress*, and would be welcomed as indicators of a transition to a better civilization. By others they could only be esteemed dangerous and revolutionary, tending toward social disruption and anarchy.

We are convinced that modern society is passing through a transition; that opinions, beliefs, modes of action are changing; that doctrines, laws, and institutions are undergoing

a searching scrutiny; and that a very different state of society from the present and the past is to be the result. We believe that many social evils, many wrongs, many errors, many unjust and unequal institutions will be overthrown and eliminated by the process. Doubtless the world is making progress. Society and governments are learning to take broader, clearer, and more rational views of human relations, needs, and duties; are learning to detect and remove inequalities and wrongs, and to institute wiser, more humane, and more just and equal laws. We are convinced that many of the social tendencies of our day, which are calculated to produce anxiety by present agitation, are yet tending toward good results; and as the storm that may be fearful in its force while raging, yet results in good, so these movements will eventuate in ridding the world of some wrongs, and giving to society better things in their stead.

But in all transitions there are dangers—dangers from the impatience of reformers in too great haste to force changes on society, which is usually sluggish and slow to change; dangers, on the other hand, from the pertinacious maintenance of error and the consecration

of injustice, after multitudes have detected the errors and have felt the injustice; but dangers still more serious, from sacrificing the most sacred virtues and the wisest and best of institutions in the hurried impulse of change. While we heartily sympathize with many of the modern movements toward reformation and change, and with the earnest attempts that are making to solve grave social problems, and to cast out of society oppressions, inequalities, and wrongs, we can not help thinking there are some most dangerous and alarming tendencies at work in our own American society. The sphere in which these tendencies to which our thoughts are just now directed are working, is that of our family life. No one can be insensible to the growing demoralization of society, both in this country and in Europe, with regard to the sacredness, responsibilities, and obligations of domestic life, and the consequent alarming frequency of divorce.

It is not necessary to detail here the statistics which would show that there is really cause for serious apprehension, as to what is to be the final result of this rapidly increasing evil in this country. The evil is already of sufficient mag-

nitude to have attracted the attention of all thoughtful people, to have called for action on the part of several ecclesiastical bodies, and to have called forth grave and serious articles in Magazines and Reviews, both at home and abroad. When a newly married couple can forthwith put into several papers a protest against the tyranny of marriage, the husband and wife jointly declaring that their marriage is to continue during their own pleasure, and that marriage is a thing between themselves and God, with which society and the law has nothing whatever to do; when a well-known divine celebrates in a sickly, sentimental, and romantic manner a marriage between parties that have previously denied all divine or legal relations of the union, and discarded from the ceremony all prayer and the slightest reference to religious duty or obligation, we may certainly begin to apprehend that there is an alarming decay of public sentiment with regard to the sacredness and divine sanctions of this institution. When in one of the smallest States of the Union, there have been 593 divorces in five years, in another one divorce for every nineteen marriages during the past year, and in another

one divorce for every eleven marriages—when in one city there were three hundred and sixty-eight divorces in a single year, and in another three hundred and twenty-eight, and there is every reason to believe that these States and cities are no worse than their neighbors, we can see that, so far as numbers and calculations can approximate the truth, the prospect is dismal. When in one State ten causes are enumerated by law as sufficient ground for divorce, and another, after declaring five reasons why a marriage may be declared void from the beginning, goes on to mention six other causes for which absolute divorce may be granted, and while in several States divorce may be obtained on the application of but one of the parties, while the other party may remain in ignorance of the application, and neither one of the parties may be a permanent resident of the State, we have certainly reasons to conclude that the laws of the land on this subject have become as demoralized as the sentiment of the people.

We think we are safe in saying that, in this Christian day and country, the case stands thus: On the one hand, there is the Church and her uniform interpretation of the Christian law, de-

claring that marriage is a contract of Divine institution, an estate of God's establishment, more ancient than any form of civil government, and the only legitimate foundation of families, which was vindicated and restored to its original rule by the law of our Lord and Savior; which, according to the apostles, represents on earth the holy, inviolable, eternal union of Christ and his Church; and which the Church, together with various civil governments, has never ceased to regard as the most holy, binding, indissoluble contract and union into which one human being can enter with another. On the other hand, there is the civil law, and a widening popular sentiment, which demands the right of treating this estate of marriage as if it were in no wise under the control of divine law; as if its sanctity were a myth; as if it were the sole creation and ordinance of the State, and to be dealt with and rent asunder as a simple affair of convenience and policy; as if all its vows, spoken and implied, were binding only so long as the caprice and humor of the parties agreed, and then to be put away with a slight formality, and a new contract with another entered into.

This state of things is more than an accident,

more than transient aberration of sentiment and feeling. He has studied the question but very superficially who has not discovered that it is linked with a deep purpose; that it is glorified by many as one of the elements of progress; that it is a movement of infidel socialism, of a philosophy which would break away from all sacred and wholesome restraints, which glorifies libertinism as liberty, and which would substitute the instincts and impulses of our own corrupt nature for the voice of God, and even for the laws of society. It is not local and temporary, it is infecting society nearly throughout all Christendom. To say nothing of France and the German States, the evil presents itself in worse forms in England than in our own country, because not accommodated by such flexible laws as with us.

Is the Church's interpretation of the divine law of marriage wrong, and is this movement of modern society right? Has the Church been usurping an authority, and enforcing a restraint in this matter, that society is right in breaking away from? Is marriage only a civil contract, an affair between the parties themselves, over which any supposed divine law should have no

control, and with which even civil law should interfere as little as possible? for this is the real and final tendency of the modern doctrine. We reply to these questions, first, that marriage is a divine institution; is a subject of divine revelation and regulation; has a higher significance and wider relations than its mere offices in social life, and that it is the duty of God's Church, within her own folds at least, to guard it by God's laws, and to preserve its sanctity and purity by her teaching and discipline. Secondly, that it is an institution of most important social relations, of vital connection with the highest interests of the State, and, therefore, is the subject of civil law, and should be most sacredly guarded, both with regard to entering into and being freed from its bonds and obligations.

We have said the Church has always claimed the right of enforcing doctrine and discipline with regard to this institution. She has recognized it as an ordinance of God, not created and not to be set aside by mere human laws. It has religious aspects and immortal relations with which society has nothing to do. The Church also recognizes its social relations, and expects

the State to be wise and strong enough to see and enforce the solemn obligations which make this institution the very foundation of the State itself. The Church, at least according to the doctrines of Protestantism, has no right or ability to compel society to accept her doctrines and laws, except so far as she can do so by the influence of her teachings and example; but as far as her own communicants are concerned, it is her right and duty to enforce and maintain what she believes to be the law of God. How far the Church may accommodate her discipline to a demoralized state of sociefy is a question that is worthy of debate, but which we can not now enter; but it is certain that she can not compromise what she believes to be the divine doctrine in this matter, however she may find herself sometimes unable to enforce it.

The doctrine of the Christian Church is well known. It is simply an acceptance of our Savior's interpretation of the institution of marriage and the divine law of divorce, as given by St. Mark, x, 3, *et seq.* On this foundation the Roman Church, in doctrine, has sustained the absolute indissolubility of the marriage tie, except for the cause of adultery, and, in practice, has

met the exigencies of certain cases by special ecclesiastical indulgences. The canon law of the Eastern and Anglican Churches admits of other reasons for separation *a mensa et thoro*, but will not allow any cause except incontinence as valid for the contracting of another marriage. This is probably the true doctrine and correct practice of the Christian Church. The alarming prevalence and facility of divorce has recently called forth action in the Assemblies and Conferences of the religious bodies of our country, and the resolutions and recommendations amount to a re-affirmation of the doctrine of the Eastern and Anglican Churches.

Is this uniform interpretation of the law of Christ correct? A vigorous writer in an article in Fraser's Magazine, which was also republished in our own Eclectic, says of "the religious argument," as it is called, "It rests upon one solitary passage in the Gospels, which is quite misinterpreted; and when that one passage is rightly understood, it becomes clear that no word is found in the Christian Scriptures prejudging the question of divorce. As we read in St. Matthew—xix, 3—the Pharisees asked Jesus, 'Is it lawful for *a man* to put away his

wife *for every cause?*' which 'Moses in the law' distinctly allowed. Observe: the question is not under what circumstances *a court of law* may pronounce a divorce; that topic is not even touched; but whether *a husband* may under *all* circumstances use the liberty given him by Moses, of taking the decision *into his own hand.* The decision is, 'Certainly not; but for one grave offense only.' Now, that reply in no way touches this argument; for, in common with all Christendom, we refuse to the husband jurisdiction *even* in that extreme case. The reply of Jesus did but put a moral limitation on the *Jewish* husband's legal power. It in no respect dealt with the general question of divorce by a public court of law. Hence, upon Christian grounds, it has no place whatever in this argument."

We have met the substance of this exposition in the Westminster Review and in several publications in our own country, and it is at least an excellent example of the facility with which the teachings of the Scriptures may be perverted and set aside. Let us a little more carefully examine the teachings of our Lord on this subject. The ancient law allowed the Jews to put

away their wives by writing a bill of divorcement. It is not necessary to particularize the cases in which this was allowed. It *was* allowed, and was, therefore, made a plea for trying our Lord. St. Mark x, 3, *et seq.*

"The Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your hearts, he wrote you this precept: But from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

And furthermore—

"In the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter. And he said unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and

be married to another, she committeth adultery."

To this St. Luke adds—

"And whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband, committeth adultery."

Two things are here plainly taught. First, That marriage in its first estate, and now by the Lord's reiteration, admits of no polygamy—"*they twain shall be one flesh*," excluding utterly a third party to this union. But, secondly, There is also here taught, most distinctly and strongly, the *indissoluble* nature of marriage. According to this it can not be obliterated. To put away a wife and marry another, or to put away a husband and marry another, or for a third party to marry the one put away, is, without any equivocation, pronounced to be an act of adultery.

Again: The Gospel law permits one single exception only to the stringency of this rule. And this exception *confirms the rule.* The marriage bond *may* be dissolved upon the ground of *adultery*. Dissolved, we say, so far as to permit the innocent party at least to marry again during the lifetime of the other. This we learn from several passages. St. Matthew—

xix, 3, *et seq*—narrating the same conversation which was just quoted from St. Mark's Gospel, records the Lord's declaration as follows:

"And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, *except it be for fornication*, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away, doth commit adultery."

Again in the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew v, 31, 32, the Lord thus declared his will without reference to any specific question:

"It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: but I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, *saving for the cause of fornication*, causes her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery."

This exception of adultery proves the general rule of the indissolubility of marriage. It is the sole exception. This has been declared by Divine authority to be the one only cause which can be urged to dissolve the marriage relation. Except upon this ground, every divorce which allows the parties to marry again, contradicts the Lord's law, for the parties are still, by the light

of the Divine law, husband and wife. There may have been certain obstacles existing *at the time* of marriage, such as consanguinity within the forbidden degrees, insanity, idiocy, etc., either of which, it is generally agreed by jurists, invalidate the marriage from the beginning; and the proof of which authorizes the court to declare it to be null and void; and there may be certain cases of intolerable hardship which may fully justify the court for the protection of an injured citizen in granting a legal separation *a mensa et thoro*, or as the French term it, *separation de corps*; but in the light of the Divine law no obstacle or event whatever which may arise *after* the marriage can interfere to procure a divorce by which the marriage is utterly dissolved, and the innocent person is allowed to marry again, saving only this one of connubial infidelity. This we believe to be the Divine law of divorce, and, consequently, the law of the Church.

Marriage is one of those divine ordinances which is limited to no country or dispensation, which has most vital relations to the moral and spiritual, and even immortal destinies of the race, and is therefore properly subject to the

Divine will and law. But it is also an institution having most intimate connection with the safety and welfare of the State, and therefore must of necessity be subject to control and regulation by civil law. There are not very many who have become so absurd as to suppose that an institution, so vitally related to the welfare of society, can be left wholly to the will and caprice of individuals. There is, however, a very considerable school of writers who maintain that it should be "trammeled" by as few laws as possible, and that both entrance into the marriage state, and exit from it, ought to be left as nearly as possible to the freedom of individuals; that it is a mere civil and individual contract, and the terms of the contract ought to be left to the parties themselves. Perhaps but few are willing to state the theory so boldly as this, but this is the ultimate meaning of much that is said of the tyranny of marriage laws, and of the demands for increased facilities for divorce.

While there is at present not much danger of these extreme views obtaining very general adoption, yet their influence is at this moment very widely felt in American and English society. They are depreciating the solemnity and sa-

credness of the marriage contract; they are leading multitudes to look lightly on the force and significance of the marriage vows; facilities afforded for obtaining release from these obligations, and familiarity with the frequency of separations and divorces, are leading husbands and wives, and even those contemplating marriage, to admit to themselves the practicability of separation as a remedy for disappointment or for domestic disagreement and hardship. While multitudes would be startled at the announcement that marriage is to be left to the freedom of individuals, and is to be without law, they are not startled at the frequency and facility of divorce, which is silently undermining the foundations of the whole institution, and practically reducing the marriage contract to one of convenience and pleasure, to be continued or discontinued at the will of the parties.

It is evident that an institution of such vital relations can not be left without the restraints and regulations of law. If there were no consequences of marriage, if it were only a matter of convenience and pleasure between two individuals, the State could well enough afford to let it alone. But marriage is the parent of fam-

ilies, is the creator of nations, is the conservator of morals and of patriotism, is the educator of citizens, and is in a thousand ways connected with the safety and welfare of the subjects whom government is bound to protect. It must therefore be regulated by law, and the question is only how much and how far should the law interpose its guards and restraints. For ourself we would answer this question by saying that, of course, the more nearly civil law conforms to the will and law of God in this case, the better will the solemnity and sanctity of marriage be maintained, the better will the purity and stability of society be preserved, and the better will the interests of the marriage parties, of their offspring, and of society at large be subserved. The object of all laws of the State is the protection of its subjects, both individually and collectively, and it is the duty of the State to save its individual subjects from oppression, from peculiar hardships even, so far as this can be done without incurring risk of a greater evil to its subjects collectively. Easy divorce might often work admirably for a few individuals, but facility and frequency of divorce must work ruin to society. The very least that civil law ought

to do in creating guards and restraints over this institution may be arranged under the following heads:

1. The State should aim in all laws, and all its treatment of this great interest, to preserve the solemnity and dignity of the estate of marriage. To this end the statute law should, as far as practicable, prevent all hasty, secret, illegal, and irresponsible marriages. The State has the right to know who and how many enter into this relation, the age, and legal qualifications of the parties. All marriages should take place only under the license of the State. And yet in many of our States there is almost absolutely no law on the subject of entering into marriage. In many places men and women, known and unknown, publicly and privately, at any hour of the day or night, without signature, without witness, without identification, clandestinely or otherwise, are allowed to enter into this state without let or hinderance. In other States, the whole burden of ascertaining the marriageability of the parties, and the responsibility of the legality of the marriage, is most absurdly thrown upon the clergyman who performs the ceremony. Such a state of things tends in advance to demoralize

society on this subject. The State gives it no attention, does nothing to dignify and indicate the true honor of marriage, does nothing to identify the parties for the sake of the peace and good order of the community. It gives the friends of the innocent and unsuspecting no opportunity to detect and expose profligate designs. It treats marriage so lightly that the people soon learn to look upon it with the same levity, and it is not at all surprising if the parties to hasty and ill-assorted unions, after their plans are accomplished, easily slide into the current of divorce; and when, as is so widely the case, the divorce itself may be easily obtained, no wonder that in time we have an increasing multitude of hasty and ill-assorted unions.

2. With regard to divorce itself, there are three aspects in which the legislator should view it. First, there may be injustice and great individual wrong in the marriage itself. There may have been certain obstacles existing at the time of marriage, fraudulently kept from the knowledge of one of the parties, or even obstacles unknown to either party, sufficient to vitiate the contract. For frauds or vital mistakes in the marriage itself, the State certainly has the right

of interference for the protection of its subjects. Hence jurists are nearly all agreed that certain causes invalidate the marriage from the beginning, and several of the States make provisions for this. Most of the New England States, and others, provide that, on account of forbidden consanguinity, insufficiency of age, lunacy, or idiocy of one of the parties, existing before marriage, force or fraud used to obtain consent, etc., the court, on sufficient proof, may declare the marriage void from the beginning.

Secondly, even when adultery is not charged, there may undoubtedly be cases where the law should interfere for the protection of oppressed and wronged citizens. Certain cases of intolerable hardship, of violent and shameful treatment, of abuse and indignity, of habitual drunkenness, of convicted crime and long imprisonment, of willful and continued desertion, and of other gross conduct which ruins all the moral purposes of marriage, evidently call for the interposition of the civil law. And in such cases the State, by virtue of that authority by which she protects the lives, the property, and the public order of her citizens, may justly separate the husband and wife, and deliver the oppressed

party from all legal rights and claims held by the oppressor. But the State is not hereby justified in granting absolute divorce. It may and should decree a *legal* separation, because the marriage contract is a legal contract; but it is more than a legal contract, it is a divinely appointed joining together of God, and what God has joined together let not man put asunder, except as God himself declares the union annulled. The State may declare null and void the legal claims of a wrong-doer over the oppressed party, for the State is to a great extent the creator and preserver of these legal claims. The power of the State in these cases justly extends to a divorce *a mensa et thoro*, and no farther. Beyond this the divine law prevails. The State goes too far when for such causes it declares such a dissolution of the bond as permits either of the parties to marry again during the lifetime of the other. This limitation is not only required by the divine law, but we are satisfied it is absolutely necessary for the preservation of the sanctity of marriage and the purity and safety of society. Absolute divorces for causes of this kind is exactly what is now demoralizing society, and is the evil that is awaking alarm in

thoughtful minds. The law of *separation only* may bear heavily on a limited number of individuals, but less heavily of course than the evil from which it delivers them, or they would not seek the remedy, while no human laws can avert entirely, even from innocent persons, the consequences of wrong doing by others; and in this case the hardship of the individual is a vastly less evil than would be the demoralization of marriage from frequency of absolute divorce to society at large.

3. There remains the third ground for interference on the part of the State; namely, the right of the State to annul absolutely the marriage, when its whole moral significance has been subverted by connubial infidelity. On this ground all are agreed, and the laws of man are sanctioned by the higher laws of God. But there still are grave questions which we do not purpose to discuss here, and on which we can only affirm our own conviction: first, that the law should be equally emphatic in condemning connubial infidelity on the part of the husband as on the part of the wife, and, secondly, that a divorce *a vinculo matrimonii*, by which the marriage is utterly dissolved, should either con-

fer the right of re-marriage only on the innocent person, or the statute law should make provision for the punishment of the crime of adultery; otherwise it is not difficult to see the danger of inducing the commission of adultery as a means of dissolving a hated marriage, and bringing about a union with a new and preferred partner.

Such protection and interference we believe are demanded of the State for the preservation of the sacredness of this vital institution, and for the guardianship of her own subjects from oppression and fraud. She has a right to demand that all marriages shall be matters of publicity, and shall be known to the State. She has a right to declare marriages accomplished through fraud and force, or deception, null and void; in certain cases of peculiar hardship and suffering, she has the right to interpose for the protection and relief of her suffering subjects, so far as to deliver the sufferer from the legal rights and claims of the oppressor; and in cases of connubial infidelity she has the right to declare the marriage contract obliterated, and the injured party absolutely free. Beyond this she has no right to go; less than this does not sufficiently guard

this institution so intimately connected with the peace and order of society, as well as with the highest moral and religious welfare of the race.

We are not unaware that these views are not in accordance with the demands of certain reformers, and will draw only a smile from some who like to be recognized as the "advanced" thinkers of the age. Yet we are convinced that the laws of God are the wisest and the best in this matter, as in all others, and that the laws of God can not be broken by States, any more than by individuals, without consequences of evil as much more serious and far-reaching, as the State is greater than the individual. God's law in this case, as in all other cases, is not arbitrary, but wise and good, growing out of the necessities and relations of the marriage institution to society. The world is not so young that we have not had ample opportunity to experiment with this matter, and history contains abundant warning and admonition. We need not stop to do more than refer to the solemn warnings of French history, and to see how intimately social decadence and demoralization of marriage are associated. When the French Revolution swept away the usages of ages and

the sanctity of religion, its special war seemed against the marriage contract; and six thousand divorces are said to have taken place, in the city of Paris alone, in the space of two years and three months. From this fearful shock French society has scarcely yet begun to recover, and Paris still retains her notorious pre-eminence as the most licentious city of the world.

But the lessons of antiquity are better, because worked out on a larger scale, and exhibiting more clearly the natural and necessary consequences of a disregard of these inviolable social laws. Greece and Rome for ages shame our Christian licentiousness. Roman philosophers, poets, and satirists hold up to public scorn and indignation doctrines less latitudinarian than are taught in our own days, and foretell, with vivid distinctness, the certain ruin that eventually came from a wanton abuse of a liberty of divorce which did not greatly exceed ours. The institutions of Romulus made the marriage union indissoluble. Three hundred years afterward, the Twelve Tables gave to the husband the freedom of divorce; yet the Republic had existed five hundred years, when the

first instance of divorce occurred, and the experimenter was loaded with public opprobrium. But it was the beginning of the end. The law that gave to the husband power to dissolve the marriage almost at will, struck its first blow by producing a state of things wherein the Roman daughters would not enter into legitimate marriage at all. The marriage was simply *inferred*, and the wife never came "into the hand of her husband." While this system prevailed almost universally among the plebeians, its influence had the effect of producing among the patricians a state of things in which the marriage contract might be dissolved by either one of the parties. So universal was the custom of *inferred* marriages among the plebeians, which the husband could and did set aside at his pleasure, and so common and alarming were the voluntary divorces among the patricians, that Augustus made several powerful attempts to put some restraint on the facility of these separations. But it was too late, and his laws and decrees were overpowered by the prevailing corruption of manners. The nation perished, "utterly corrupted in its own corruption."

Gibbon, certainly no bigot in this matter, tells

the results of this freedom in a few emphatic words: "When the Roman matrons became the equal and voluntary companions of their lords, a new jurisprudence was introduced—that marriage, like other partnerships, might be dissolved by the abdication of one of the associates. In three centuries of prosperity and corruption, this principle was enlarged to frequent practice and pernicious abuse. Passion, interest, or caprice suggested daily motives for the dissolution of marriage. A word, a sign, a message, a letter, the mandate of a freedman, declared the separation. The most tender of human connections was degraded to a transient society of profit or pleasure. . . *A specious theory is confuted by this free and perfect experiment, which demonstrates that the liberty of divorce does not contribute to happiness and virtue.*"

One would hardly suppose that this "specious theory" would need to be confuted by actual historical experiment. It ought to be apparent to every thoughtful mind, that liberty and facility of divorce, so far from "contributing to happiness and virtue," must of necessity undermine the very foundations of both. Remove legal

restraints and social disgrace from these separations, and they would be needlessly multiplied a thousand fold; the sacredness, the stability, the moral significance of the union would be at an end; thousands would never enter the marriage relation at all, thousands more would treat the relation as lightly as any other mere matter of caprice or passion; all love, all mutual confidence, all forbearing one another in love, all the moral effect and discipline from the conviction of the all but irrevocable force of the vow of union, would be lost out of society; trifling disputes, instead of being healed, would be inflamed and allowed to increase and gather till they would force the final plunge.

Facility of separation is a two-edged sword in its destructive power on society. It removes from the married pair the wholesome moral effect of restraint and discipline, which arises from the consideration that the union between them is irrevocable, that they are to live together, adapt themselves to each other, overcome little differences of temper, grow into one spirit, and build up in their own little circle a home of happiness and virtue. On the other hand, if

husband and wife are perpetually admitting to themselves the possibility of separation, the very facility of a dissolution is a temptation to resort to it, even in cases of mere domestic disagreement, in the haste and passion of a transient dispute, and many would make the fatal plunge under a momentary aggravation, probably to spend the rest of their lives in repenting their folly.

But facility of separation necessarily draws after it the possibility of marrying with the premeditated intention of terminating the union after a limited time, and thus a fatal blow is struck to the whole meaning and sanctity of marriage. For if, when the union is formed, it is not intended and fully expected to be a life-union, what is the marriage but a formal and recognized prostitution? Exactly this point was reached in Roman demoralization, and then came the end. So old Timeus in Terence represents, that there can be no great harm if a young man, where it seems to be convenient, marry a lady whom he does not love: "You need not be afraid to take her. If you find you do not like her, you will *only* have to give her up." Not to reprobate and detest such pre-

tended marriages, is to justify the sensualism of every libertine. Says an English writer, who is by no means illiberal in his views on this subject, "No persons of high and pure mind can ever intend not to reprobate, not to detest, not to express disgust, at 'temporary unions,' intended to be temporary from the first; but if unlimited divorce is to be permitted, and is not to be resented, we lose all right to judge or reprove any union which covers itself by the mere word 'marriage.' For though we may be clearly convinced that it is intended to be temporary, we have never a right to assert it while the parties keep their own counsel." The purpose may, indeed, be that of only one of the parties, unknown to the other, and the whole marriage, so far as he or she is concerned, be only a base fraud and deception of one of the parties. Thus would be undermined the foundation of all domestic virtue and happiness. What parent could feel the least security in giving his daughter into hands that may cast her off at pleasure, or to a husband who, at the very time, may mean that the union shall be only temporary? What bride would feel the joy of confiding and hoping love on entering

into a union that may soon be repudiated by an unprincipled and fickle husband?

We have said enough to indicate how vitally the sanctity and inviolability of the marriage relation is linked with the purity, happiness, and safety of society. God foresaw this from the beginning, and prescribed for the very first pair the only, perpetual, and irrevocable law that can adequately guard and preserve this institution. If there be a truth beyond all question, where God's law, social experience, the uniform record of our species, the inevitable and horrid results of its violation, every source of testimony, warning, and appeal concur, it is the sacredness of the marriage bond, and the national decline which attends a tolerated disregard or facile rupture of its divine constitution. "From the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

X.

POLITICAL RELATIONS OF WOMEN.

O observant mind can be insensible to the large share of attention given, both at home and abroad, to questions involving the rights and interests of women, the relations of the sexes, and grave social questions involving an almost radical reconstruction of society. In England and America there is evidently great restlessness on the subject of the so-called political rights of the female sex. We think we can trace the history of this restlessness. Though just now, perhaps, predominant in boldness and vigor of assertion in our country, its origin is not American, but English, and its first demands were not for extravagant political rights for women, but the right to live, and to procure the means of life. The superabundance of female population in England, the great number left in an unmarried and unprotected state, the very few

vocations left open to women for the exercise of their industry and the means of living, the miserable pittance doled out to them for whatever labor or service they were permitted to perform, at length aroused the attention of both sexes to the hardship of the lot of unmarried women, and the injustice that society was perpetually practicing toward them. At the same time education and intelligence were steadily advancing among the female population, and soon out of their own number arose women of talent who were able to make themselves felt as advocates and defenders of their own sex. The demand was for enlarged opportunities by which women could provide for themselves the means of independent livelihood. For years the subject was agitated in these simple aspects. Wise and philanthropic men and women discussed the question, formed societies, tried experiments, endeavored to devise means by which independent and remunerative employment could be provided for women. The same questions very naturally passed over to our own country, where the same difficulties to some extent exist, but in a very much less degree than in the Old World, the fundamental fact in

the case—an excess of female population—being in our country exactly reversed. Yet the instances in which females were left, either voluntarily or involuntarily, in singleness, and the multitude of instances of struggling widowhood, and the rapaciousness and injustice of employers, gave ample ground in our own country for the agitation of these questions.

The case made out in behalf of women on these grounds is one that appeals powerfully to our sense of justice and our sympathy. The condition of women, alone and unprotected and unprovided for by the strong hand of man, whether that loneliness be desolate widowhood, or stricken orphanage, or unloved maidenhood, is even in our own day and country one of the gravest facts of our social life, and how to remedy the evils which encompass such women, increase the opportunities of independent livelihood, ameliorate their sufferings, remove their temptations, and place them beyond the power of rapacious and unjust men is one of the greatest and most interesting social problems of our day. The solution is evidently to be found in opening up more numerous and remunerative avocations to female industry

This again enlarges the question, and opens up for discussion the capabilities of women, the fields of labor into which it is possible for them to enter, and their comparative worth as laborers when placed side by side with men in the industries of life.

From the importance and breadth of these questions we can readily see how their discussion would soon run into what is popularly known as the "woman's rights" agitation, and from the greater sprightliness and activity and more independent habits of thought and action of our countrywomen, it is not strange that they should soon outrun their transatlantic sisters in the urgency and extent of their demands. With us the problems of the welfare of unmarried women were soon supplemented by more agitating problems growing out of the marriage relation itself, and the agitation of these problems has given rise to anomalous relations and modes of life as yet almost unknown in European life, startling to travelers and observers who visit us from abroad, and send them back to Europe to astonish whole nations by books on "Marriage in the United States," "New America," "New Religions of the United States,"

"Social Problems of the Great Republic," etc. From just demands in behalf of women for enlarged means of independence and self-provision, with which every wise man and woman could heartily sympathize, the leaders of these agitations would "claim every thing that society allows to men, from pantaloons and latch-keys to seats in the legislature and pulpits in the Church." They would effect a complete revolution in all our social, political, and industrial interests and institutions. The most advanced women of this school renounce all creeds, are ready to pull down all churches, and "rejoice that an age of religion has given way to the age of free inquiry." The marriage relation with its necessary ties and duties, is a burden to these free and independent women. "The whole theory of the common law," they say, "in relation to the married woman, is unjust and degrading," and discuss such questions as "What are the natural relations of one sex to the other? Is marriage the highest and purest form of these relations? What are the moral effects of marriage upon man and wife? Is marriage a holy state?" etc. The answer to all these questions is intended to imply that

marriage is a degradation and servitude to woman.

While many of the questions of "woman's rights," which are rife in our country, are wholly unknown in Europe, it is a singular fact that in this last phase of the agitation—the right of female suffrage—it would be hard to determine whether England or America is entitled to precedence, either with regard to time or the earnestness with which the demand is made. In England the demand grew out of the agitation in behalf of enlargement of the franchise to Englishmen, some leading politicians and some talented women soon suggesting the question—Why not also embrace certain classes of women in this enlarged enfranchisement? Its chief representative among English statesmen is J. Stuart Mill, who is also the advocate for the enfranchisement of all English freeholders and householders. In our country the demand arose amid the discussions of the enfranchisement of the freedmen throughout the South; and the proposed extension of the right of suffrage to the colored men of the North. In England, Frances Power Cobb, Lydia Becker, and other talented women, have

become the champions of the cause through the power of their graceful pens. In our country the school of Lucretia Mott, Lucy Stone, Elizabeth Cowles, and Elizabeth Stanton, and still more recklessly and intensely than either of these, Victoria Woodhull, and her party, have taken the lead, sometimes with the pen, but more frequently on the stump and forum. In both countries the right and expediency of the measure are advocated by some of the leading journals and dignified and serious reviews.

The demand presents different phases in the two countries. With us it is simply the question of universal suffrage; in England, as is the case with all suffrage, the question is partial, and proposes to extend the suffrage to certain classes of women, possessed of a certain amount of property in their own right, and having no proper male representative. Leaving the English to take care of the subject as it presents itself among them, we propose to glance at the question as it is agitated among us.

Here, where scarcely any limitations are placed on the exercise of the franchise when it is once granted to a certain class, that is, where no property qualification, or, in most places,

even any measure of intellectual qualification, is required of the voter, it is the simple question, Shall the right of suffrage be extended to all American women of proper age? or, in other words, shall we strike the word *male* out of our National and State Constitutions? In this broad meaning it is at least American: limited, it would be inconsistent with the genius of American institutions. With this broad significance, then, it does not mean to extend the right of suffrage to a certain class of intelligent, refined, virtuous American women, but shall we open the polls to all classes of American women, native-born and naturalized, the intelligent and the ignorant, the refined and the degraded, the virtuous and the debased? As voting implies electing, and we can not say to the enfranchised elector you may vote, but it must only be for candidates of our nomination, the question in its full meaning implies also the election of females to any and all offices. Hence the question of "Woman's Suffrage" is in itself not merely a question of so many more votes thrown into the ballot-box, but is the vital question of the social and political relations of women.

To this question we can not but vote a decided negative, and proceed to give our reasons. And, first, we do not for a moment suppose that the women of our country, taken as a whole, are not quite as competent to exercise the political function of voting as the men, and we freely concede that multitudes of our women are incomparably more fitted for it than multitudes of men to whom our democratic liberality has extended the franchise. Nor do we suppose that if admitted to the suffrage they would revolutionize the State, or greatly modify any of our political institutions, or that we would be any worse governed then than at present. Quite possibly some things might be made better by feminine participation and influence. And yet it would be a complete revolution of society; it would completely change the status of woman, and, by consequence, that of man also. Woman may possibly assert her right to be a man, but hardly, we think, to be a man and woman too. If she gains the one, she must inevitably, to a greater or less extent, lose the other. If she ceases to be the home companion, the friend, the confident, the co-worker of man in the privacies and affections of domestic life, and

becomes his rival and competitor in public strife, man can do nothing less than recognize and treat her as such. If it be said the woman would not become the rival and competitor of the man in these new political relations, but his companion and co-worker, then the demand is not for free and untrammeled suffrage, but for the right to vote according to the opinions and wishes of her husband or male relatives, and it means nothing. In this sense she is already fully represented in her desires and opinions by the voice of her male representatives. Of course the demand means that she shall think and vote as she pleases; that she may stand at the same election polls and nullify the vote of husband, father, or brother; that she may place herself in nomination for any office; that she may meet in clubs, publish journals, advocate or denounce measures according to her own opinions, and use all ordinary political methods to carry her points, whether they may be in opposition to or accord with the views and wishes of her male relatives. If it does not mean this it is not worth contending for. It is possible that her views and opinions may be nearer right than those of her male friends:

but who can suppose that antagonism of political view and action could long exist without completely revolutionizing the social relations of the sexes as they now exist? To suppose that these oppositions and antagonisms would not arise, is to suppose that female suffrage is to be a mere nominal thing without force or meaning; and to suppose that these antagonisms could exist without destroying the peace and harmony of our domestic relations, is to be ignorant of the delicate and sensitive nature of these relations, and of the strength, and violence even, of political prejudices and passions.

But this revolution of society is exactly the thing avowedly aimed at by many of the male and female leaders of the agitation. "It is," say they, "the first great step toward the emancipation of woman;" "it is the first step toward her deliverance from the degradation of all past history." "The right of suffrage will be to woman what the right of suffrage is to the freedmen of the South, their defense against oppression, and the instrument of independent self-protection." "It is the assertion and vindication of the entire equality of women with men, and we demand that the word *male* be

struck out of all State Constitutions, and that *females* be admitted to every right, privilege, and responsibility now enjoyed by men." Such demands, of course, imply a complete revolution in all social, political, and industrial interests and institutions—revolution, we mean, in the sense of radical reconstruction.

But what would be the effect of this reconstruction on society? To us it seems the result would be evil, and only evil, and that continually. Its worst effects would fall on woman herself, and as woman is pre-eminently the conservator of our social life, so long as she occupies her true position and exercises her true womanly influence, when she passes out of that position and loses that influence, all society must suffer. When she ceases to be a woman and becomes only another man, she of course resigns her womanly position and influence. To lift her out of her position as the loving and beloved queen of home and priestess of all the charities and felicities of our domestic life, into that of a political thinker, schemer, debater, and agitator, would be as ruinous to society as is her degradation in heathen countries into a mere plaything or servant.

None rejoice more than we in the exaltation of women, in their emancipation from the wrongs inherited from pagan forms of society, and their assumption of their true place of dignity, equality, and power in our social life. The idea of a hard line of separation between man and woman has passed away. In our day women and men are really companions; the home has acquired the ascendency; the women of the family are the man's chosen society; the wife is his chief associate, his most confidential friend, and often his most trusted counselor. This is the true human life, and for it we are pre-eminently indebted to that Christianity which so admirably defines and limits the true relations of the sexes, but which is so generally discarded by the reforming women of America. Can women afford to give up this position of special and peculiar associate, friend, and counselor, for that of a mere equal or competitor of man in the strifes, agitations, prejudices, passions, and places of political life? Can she enter into the political arena and not lose her position of home ascendency, of the loved and loving confident and friend? Can she mingle with the undignified turmoil of a contested elec-

tion, and in the discreditable scenes that too often disgrace the polls, and return unscathed in her womanly delicacy, refinement, and modesty, to preside as the chaste and unsullied priestess of the sanctities of home? And can society exchange the quiet but all-pervading and all-powerful influence of retired, refined, modest womanhood, for the masculine boldness, forwardness, and coarseness of political women, without suffering a demoralization of which we can not now perhaps imagine?

Ambition, pride, willfulness, or any earthly passion will distort the true woman. Woman's worst enemy is he who would cruelly lift her out of her true womanly character and work, and would try to reverse the laws of God and of nature in her behalf. They deceive women who cause them to believe that they will find independence when they abandon the positions assigned them by their Creator, and reach one against which their nature, and the interests of society, and the laws of God contend. In spite of all the sneers and scorn that certain writers throw upon the word, women have their sphere and work, just as all God's creatures have their appropriate places and offices.

Woman is not the natural head of society. Man, rough, stern, cold, and almost nerveless, is made to be the head of human society; and woman, quick, sensitive, pliant, gentle, loving, is the heart of the world. As the heart she has power. She rules through love, and becomes a blessing, greater than we can ever acknowledge, because it is greater than we can measure. Society can not afford to lose out of it this powerful influence and work, and it is utterly impossible for women to supply in any other way a compensation for the loss of their own womanly character and office.

We believe this demand for enlarged political opportunities is made on mistaken views of social relations, and especially of the relations of the sexes. The great pendulum of popular opinion is perpetually swinging to extremes. The awakened thought of modern society finds woman isolated, separated from man, the instrument of his pleasure or the subject of his oppressions, and in the heat of reformation would hurry her on out of all womanly character, and into spheres for which Nature no more intended her than she intended man to be a woman. From the reformation of certain

wrongs, the agitation passes on to the demand of certain imaginary rights. From the discussion of certain abuses the debate merges into the claim of intellectual, physical, and political equality of the sexes. For the abolition of every species of wrong or injustice toward women we heartily labor and pray; but some of these imaginary rights we as heartily deny, among which is the right of any woman to lose her loveliness, modesty, gentleness, and womanliness. We deny the right of woman to leave the queenly place in Christian society to which the Creator assigned her, and for which her true nature fits her, to usurp spheres of action in which she would inevitably lose the last remnants of that grace which distinguishes her from the opposite sex.

We have but little patience with the whole question of the comparative abilities of the two sexes. They are incomparable subjects. There is no such thing as equality, inferiority, or superiority. They are two different beings; they have two different spheres of action and duty which blend and harmonize in the highest and holiest purposes of human society. "Nature has decreed that woman shall be the eternal

contrast of man, that man may be charmed by the contrast, attracted by his curiosity, and instigated by his desires." Woman is pre-eminent in her own nature and sphere, adapted to duties which it is impossible for man to perform. Man is pre-eminent in his nature and sphere, made for positions and services which it is impossible for woman to fill. Both together make the perfect human being, and by blending their various natures and capabilities they create, develop, and perpetuate human society, and "*these two are one.*"

It is on this unity that we would base representation and government. Government is not for the individual, but for society—and the unit in society is not the individual, but the family. That unit is represented always and every-where in our Government, when the husband and the father utters the voice of the family at the polls and in the councils of the nation. We agree with the eminent Frenchman, who has been a life-long advocate of "the emancipation of woman," but who, on the very last day of his life, rejoiced in the action of the National Assembly closing the door of the clubs against women. "For some time to come," says Leon Gozlan, "it will

be yet a good thing that there are two sexes ; at a later time we shall see. Till then let us respect customs and traditions, and among them the custom that demands that women shall preside at home, give birth to children, and endure the annoyance of bringing them up."

But it is exceedingly questionable whether there is any real substantial benefit to accrue to women, from forsaking the department of life for which they are pre-eminently qualified, for a sphere of public or political action. What disability of women can be removed by the elective franchise? Ballots have no influence on physiology, nor can the franchise change the great laws of nature and of society. Women will be women still, with whatever disabilities, as women, now attach to them, yet adhering to them though they hold a ballot in their hands. It is supposed by many that woman as a voter could demand better compensation for her labor, and could become a more independent competitor for place and remuneration. It is not disputed that many women, depending upon their own resources for subsistence, are unable to earn a comfortable support. But how is the ballot to remedy this? No one has yet told us

what laws or what public policy would remedy this evil. Wages can not be settled by law. Employers will do the best they can in securing the most and the best skilled labor for the least wages. And this is not their fault, but their necessity; a necessity forced upon them by the inevitable competitions and rivalries of trade. If any measure of justice and propriety can be proposed by any class, by which their condition can be ameliorated, it is at once the interest, as well as the prevailing disposition of legislators in our day, to adopt it. And we may be perfectly sure, that if such measures of relief were proposed by women in any state, a large majority of men would sustain it, and legislatures would pass it; for any law which would be good for men's mothers, sisters, wives, and daughters would not be likely to be opposed by men.

And here lies a very general fallacy, which looks upon women as a *class* represented or oppressed by men. But masculine voters and lawmakers are not a class distinct from women; they are the husbands, sons, fathers, and brothers of the women they represent. The case is vastly different when one *class* of people oppresses another, and withholds the ballot in

order to render the oppressed helpless, and redress impossible. Surely there can be no sincerity in the charge sometimes made, that these husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers are intentional oppressors of their wives and mothers, their sisters and their daughters! There may be yet on the statute books some laws which bear needlessly heavy on women in certain cases. But it is equally true that in many of the cases which are adduced as instances of unequal laws, the laws themselves have been for many years mere dead letters on the statute book. It must be remembered, too, that society as a whole, of both men and women, is only gradually rising out of a civilization which admitted of many injustices to the masses of the people, and that modern legislation is as rapidly as possible eliminating these wrongs and oppressions out of human laws and institutions.

There is another supposed benefit to accrue from placing the ballot in the hands of women, and giving them official and law-making power, which is exceedingly doubtful. It is that women as voters and law-makers will aid immensely in the work of general reforms. But, it is necessary, just here, to ask what is meant by

women? It is not proposed to open this political life only to the refined, educated, virtuous women of the land, but to all women, and to all classes of women. Is it, then, quite certain that the final aggregate of the votes of all the women in the land would be on the side of reform? Are not multitudes of women leading lives of vice and sin? Are not multitudes of women conducting immoral trades and branches of business? Are not still greater multitudes of women implicated in immoral business through their husbands? How would all these vote and legislate? Let us take the temperance reform as an illustration. Temperate, refined, intelligent women, we will say, would be on the side of temperance. But let us sum up the other side. There are multitudes of bad women, the vicious and abandoned, numbering thousands in every city, who would cast their vote and their whole power against temperance laws. There are multitudes of women making their livelihood out of dram-shops and beer-saloons. There are women carrying on distilleries, theaters, circuses, etc. There are thousands of women whose husbands are making for them homes and fortunes by manufacturing or sell-

ing liquors. There are thousands of wives of drinking men, who could only vote against intemperance at the peril of all home peace; and there are, then, thousands of fashionable women, fond of their wines, and still more fond of the display of wines and liquors, who would not favor stringent temperance laws. We may be sure, too, that these classes of opposers would be the more active, noisy, and energetic in the contest. Is it not, then, exceedingly doubtful on which side the majority would fall?

But, says the persistent advocate of enfranchisement, will not the good element among women—the wives and daughters of good men—equal in number, and more than equal in moral force, the vicious and ignorant? In numbers, no; in moral force we will grant them the preponderance. But where should this force be exercised—where most profitably used? Should we array it in conflict with their sisters at the polls, *where they would meet as equals*, or in the charities of life, where a diversion might be created, and where their superior influence could be brought to bear against vice, at the living fount, without weakening the political power by which it must be restrained? It may be con-

tended that in numbers, also, they would hold the balance, and thus be able to do a double duty, namely, to *teach* reform and *enforce* the lesson. We will not stop to take a census; but, admitting for a moment the correctness of the claim, how long would it be before the tables would be turned? To one birth among the active promoters of woman's rights, and the class to which we should look for an intelligent and independent exercise of suffrage, we have five among the sons and daughters of toil, confining the remark to that portion who never will raise themselves above "the dependent hireling and scavenger." And this proportion, according to present appearances, will go on increasing. Fashionable life and leisure, as now practiced, is opposed to maternity. The devotees have no time to waste in the nursery. They relinquish the pains and pleasures of rearing families to their more hardy and needy sisters, and thus, by enforcing poverty, making it almost impossible to bring up the progeny of such parents in the full light of Christian example and its humanizing influences.

By doubling the franchise in each family, we thereby—if our reasoning is correct—double the

political power of the most doubtful class in society—increase the reformatory labor largely; while we lessen, by comparison of numbers, the means of introducing those wholesome reforms upon which the future of families, of society, of governments, of country, so largely depend. It may be a triumph of the right in the estimation of the advocates of enfranchisement, to endow one high-minded, noble and strong woman with the right of voting; but where the process that does this confers the same "right" on half a dozen weak-minded and ignoble sisters, it is not difficult to strike a balance between "expediency" and its opposite.

But there is another powerful objection to the dewomanizing of women. It is the influence that the process must inevitably have on men. The mere question of women's voting, in itself considered, is not a very grave one. It would not amount to much in society, one way or the other, that so many more ballots were placed in the ballot-box. But, as we have seen, the "woman movement" means infinitely more than this; it means that, as far as she can, she shall exercise the capacities, occupy the places, do the works, and possess the independence,

that have hitherto been the prerogatives of men; in short, that she shall no longer be a woman, in any sense that implies weakness or dependence. She will seek her own ways, assert her own individuality, and use all possible means to become in every way independent of men. Now, we are not of those that believe women were made for men, one whit more than men were made for women; but we do believe that they were made for each other, and that the true nature and character of the one is an essential need of the other. We have said enough of the degradation of woman, when she shall cease to be a woman in every true sense of the word; our present thought is that it equally involves the degradation of man. Man needs the woman, the real womanly woman, as much as the weaker and more dependent woman needs the man. We mean that man exactly needs the *dependent* woman, the woman to live for, to work for, to make a home for. It is the dependence of the wife and children that is the inspiration of the husband and father. Take this away, and from the vast majority of men you have removed the most powerful motive that gives activity to their life. To make a

home, to bring a wife of his love into it, to care for her and his children, to amass a fortune for them, to provide for their safety and welfare after his death, these are the purest, the mightiest, the most sacred of the inspirations of men. Take away from them this office of provider, of maker and guardian of home, or take from them this motive of the dependence of wife and children, and it is impossible to measure the extent of their degeneration. Aside from the influences of the Spirit of God himself, there are no influences to restrain men, to keep them temperate, pure, industrious, equal to that powerful feeling that a loving, pure, dependent woman is clinging to him and his manly labors for her happiness and need. The world can not afford to exchange this powerful and sacred influence which has been working in all the past, coming, if you please, from the very gentleness, weakness, and dependence of women, for any imaginary benefits that might possibly accrue from woman's apostasy from her own place, to assume one for which she was never intended.

We can not resist the temptation to close this chapter with the following beautiful and true words from the pen of Charles Kingsley:

"I should have thought that the very mission of woman was to be, in the highest sense, the educator of man from infancy to old age; that that was the work toward which all the God-given capacities of woman pointed, for which they were to be educated in the highest pitch. I should have thought that it was the glory of woman, that she was sent into the world to live for others, rather than for herself; and therefore I should say, let her smallest rights be respected, her smallest wrongs be redressed; but let her never be persuaded to forget that she is sent into the world to teach man, what I believe she has been teaching him all along, even in the savage state, namely, that there is something more necessary than the claiming of rights, and that is, the performing of duties; to teach him especially, in these so-called intellectual days, that there is something more than intellect, and that is—purity and virtue. Let her never be persuaded to forget that her calling is not the lower and more earthly one of self-assertion, but the higher and diviner calling of self-sacrifice, and let her never desert that higher life, which lives in others and for others, like her Redeemer and Lord.

"And, if any should answer, that this doctrine would keep a woman a dependent and a slave, I answer not so; it would keep her what she should be—the mistress of all around her, because mistress of herself. And more, I should express a fear that those who made that answer had not yet seen into the mystery of true greatness and true strength; that they did not yet understand the true magnanimity, the true royalty of that spirit, by which the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

"Surely that is woman's calling—to teach man; and to teach him what! To teach him, after all, that his calling is the same as hers, if he will but see the things which belong to his peace. To temper his fiercer, coarser, more self-assertive nature, by the contact of her gentleness, purity, self-sacrifice. To make him see that not by blare of trumpets, not by noise, wrath, greed, ambition, intrigue, puffery, is good and lasting work to be done on earth, but by wise self-distrust, by silent labor, by lofty self-control, by the charity which helpeth all things; by such an example, in short, as woman now in tens of thousands set to those around them;

such as they will show more and more, the more their whole womanhood is educated to employ its powers without haste in harmonious unity."

XI.

WHAT CAN WOMEN DO?

THE advancing thought and activity of the world are thrusting upon society many serious questions with which former ages were but little disturbed. Among these questions, by no means the least important or least urgent, are questions relating to the welfare and necessities of women. At one time, and in many countries, the whole question of woman's necessities was speedily disposed of, by assigning her a position far inferior and subordinate to that of man, and her destiny was accepted as a mere helpmate for her masculine lord and master. The rights of woman's property raised no question, for it was scarcely possible for her to become a proprietor. Her education was totally neglected, both because it was supposed she was incapable of any considerable degree of mental culture, and because no education was needed for the inferior and menial position

she occupied. The means by which she might reach social independence and self-maintenance were never thought of, as the idea itself was supposed to be preposterous. By nature and destiny she was a dependent being, to be provided for by her husband, whom it was her duty very largely to assist in the maintenance of the family, and after his death, if preceding her own, still to be dependent on other male relatives.

These views and arrangements prevailed into a very advanced state of civilization, and even yet but a small portion of the world has outgrown them. The influence of Christianity, in its perhaps slow but sure progress, has been gradually dissolving these notions inherited from pagan barbarism, or, if you please, pagan civilization. Much as some of the most advanced advocates of woman's interests contemn the Bible, and feel aggrieved by the wholesome limitations of Christianity, every reader of history knows the only stream of light in behalf of woman which has been flowing down through the ages, is that which has been issuing from the Word of God; and that the only religion of the world that has ennobled

woman and given her a recognition as equal in sublime destiny with man, is the religion of the New Testament. The women of the Old Testament, too, long before the name of woman was doubly sanctified by the ministries of Christ in the homes of the Marys and Marthas of the Gospel, were immeasurably elevated above their sisters in all the surrounding nations.

Christianity, if it does not originate, certainly disseminates and enforces in the world the doctrine of the moral equality of men and women in the sight of God, and assigns to both alike a destiny full of responsibilities and capable of momentous results. As the world apprehended this Christian thought, the sexes began more nearly to approach each other; the marriage relation became more sacred and indissoluble; the relation of wife and mother became more significant and responsible; the mental and moral necessities of woman became more obvious and imperative; her individuality was more clearly recognized; her rights and claims upon society more clearly defined; and, consequent upon all these, the necessity of larger opportunities and of better means by which she

might be prepared for the responsibilities and rights of her new position, was more clearly discerned. The doors of education were opened to women, and education means learning to think. Woman began to think for herself and in behalf of herself, and repelling with indignation the wrongs of the past, she began to assert the rights of her new position, and in the heat of debate conceived a still more independent position for herself, in which she should be absolutely the participator with man in all the duties and responsibilities, emoluments and honors of domestic, social, and political life.

In the mean time the same advancing civilization has developed a new phase of social life, in which the wars, the ambitions, the wild adventures, the schemes of conquest, and the chivalry of the past, have been supplanted by intense devotion to the industries of life. Trade, manufactures, commerce, literature, all aiming at wealth and independence as the ideal of earthly success, crowd and intensify the life of to-day. While so many are intensely struggling after wealth, and the great ideal of life with multitudes is to accumulate vast fortunes, and to live in a style commensurate with their

fortunes, multitudes more are driven, by the very force of this battle for wealth, face to face with the stern question of how to live at all. Among these latter multitudes are many women on whom is laid the necessity of providing for themselves. The same intense desire for wealth and independence has also seized many women whom no necessity would drive into the marts of trade and industry, but who would enter them of choice. They assert their right to enter the lists with men ; they claim equal ability for all the ordinary avocations, and demand that all distinctions and limitations be cast aside, and that the doors be opened to women to every employment and responsibility hitherto usurped by men.

Hence the question heading this chapter—what can women do?—becomes a complex one, not only involving her mental and physical capabilities, but her relations to society ; not only what she is *able* to do, but what in society as it is she *may* do, and what in the assertion of her own rights she demands to be permitted to do. This last part of the question we can shortly dispose of by saying that the most advanced of her representatives demand for her "a perfect

equalization for all purposes whatever, not distinctly precluded by physiological differences of the male and the female portions of the race." With regard to this demand we have only now to say, that if fully stated and defined it may not be far from the true statement of the case, for it contains within itself a limitation that it will take a long time to settle, and which, in despite of all human demands and legislation, will assert itself through all time as an effectual bar to "the *perfect* equalization of the sexes for *all purposes whatever*." Without concerning ourselves at present with this comprehensive demand in behalf of woman, we turn to the other sides of this question which are more immediately practical and urgent.

On multitudes of women modern society itself, by its constitution and methods, has thrust the question—what can we do? Many women are obliged to provide for themselves, and often, too, for others dependent upon them. Multitudes of women are left in widowhood with children dependent on them; thousands of young girls either in orphanage, or with parents who are struggling to "keep the wolf from the door," must maintain themselves, or assist

in bringing bread to the household; many more either voluntarily or involuntarily do not marry, and must look for the means of self-support. Perhaps one-third of the women of this country are under the stern necessity of supporting themselves by their own exertions. How few are the opportunities that society affords them for gaining this support is obvious to all. Some are driven to the necessity of leaving their young children day by day, and going out to labor in order to bring them bread at night; others sew away their strength for the pittance which barely keeps famine from their doors; a small proportion compared with the whole multitude are found clerking in dry-goods stores, conducting fancy stores of their own, and in teaching; various branches of manufacturing give employment to many more, and domestic service gives a support to others, very few, however, of our own countrywomen. It is sad enough for the female to be left in this state of self-dependence; but society renders it still more sad and vastly more dangerous, by limiting her to so few spheres of action, and most of these of a menial character. This arrangement is a vast injustice and wrong to women. In some of its features

it is a vast meanness on the part of men; while in many instances base men, taking advantage of these stern necessities, convert the whole system into one of downright wickedness and rascality.

We believe the highest and holiest work for woman is that which she accomplishes in the relation of wife and mother; but this relation is not always subject to her own choice, nor do we believe that society should thrust this necessity upon her. It can not be otherwise than a degradation to woman, and for that matter to the whole married relation, that marriage should so much wear the aspect of an ultimatum for woman, and that so many females should be compelled to contemplate it only as the most feasible and respectable means of obtaining a living. The opportunities of independent self-support for woman should be such as to leave it a matter of choice with her, whether to enter, from high and proper motives, the married relation, or to pursue a life of singleness and self-maintenance. We would remove from woman all necessity of marriage which springs from a mere sense of dependence, or from fears of future want, or of inabil-

ity independently to provide for herself. There would be left to her the deeper and holier instincts of her own nature, which are God's guarantee for the future of the race, while her liberty of choice would ennoble both her and the relation into which she would voluntarily enter. This would remove all thought of degradation, inferiority, or dependence; would make both parties equals in the married relation; would make man more than ever a solicitor of her hand, and more than ever considerate of the welfare and happiness of her who had no other necessity or motive for becoming his companion than her love and choice. It would secure to woman exactly that independence which would enable her to take more time and larger observation in making her choice, and which would save her from the danger and temptation of hasty marriage, for fear of being left for life under the disabilities which now press upon unmarried women.

While we thus believe that woman should be placed in such relations to society as to leave her entirely free to choose whether to marry or not—and so far we heartily agree with the "reformers"—when they would extend this free-

dom within the marriage compact itself, and demand that the parties shall still be free, on a thousand excuses, to annul the compact and separate, we wholly and uncompromisingly dissent. Let society remove the disadvantages of woman as far as possible ; let it give her opportunities of self-maintenance ; let both parties be free to marry or not to marry, without either accepting it as a destiny or being driven to it by fear of want, and then let society demand, for its own welfare and protection, that the compact shall be indissoluble except only for the disloyalty of one of the parties.

We would thus, first of all, demand for woman enlarged opportunities for self-support, that she may occupy a position of greater independence in relation to the question whether she will assume the duties, responsibilities, and burdens of marriage—not to speak of its joys and blessings—or bear the burdens of life alone. But with multitudes there can be no choice. They must remain single. They must support themselves. There will be widows with dependent families, and there will be households in which the females of the family must assist in the support. The question is not one merely

of social improvement, but of social necessity. The demand for enlarged fields of female activity is not only the cry of a few "reforming women," it is the almost despairing cry of struggling thousands, who live on the verge of want, and many of them consequently on the verge of crime.

The question—what can woman do?—has limitations on two sides: first, the limitations of her own nature, and, secondly, the limitations of social sentiment. Ought not these limitations be brought to one side only? and should not social sentiment conform itself to the proposition, that woman should be allowed to do whatever she is capable of doing? Is she not debarred from many avocations for no other reason than custom or prejudice? Are there not many pursuits now monopolized by men that could be followed as well by women; and are there not many things now done by men that could be better done by women? Let mere custom and prejudice step aside and give place to the simple question, What is woman capable of doing? and she must answer this question for herself. She must do it in the struggle and competition of life. The data from the past and

present of woman's history are insufficient for a present answer. It must be determined by competition and experiment. The duty of woman will then be, in the spirit of Rosa Bonheur, not to demand certain rights, but to assert them by proving her ability to use and hold them.

Just here we quote and adopt the following earnest and true words from the pen of one of the clearest female thinkers and writers the present agitation has produced:

"Women can not truly succeed in their great work of self-emancipation, if they put themselves in seeming antagonism to men. They may get their rights, they probably will; but they destroy the fine relation which should exist between them and men, unless both work together for the same end. Man is all ready to serve woman, and to take up her interests as much as in the Knight-errantry times of old; but woman must use a wise policy in her dealings with him, in order that his service may be glad and spontaneous, and that his prejudices against a change of existing customs may melt away insensibly before the eloquence and power of her life.

"The first fact which women should justly

convince man of is this: that they can do a great many things which he can not do. How do they show him this? By courting his praise and flattery, or by laudation of their sex and boasted independence? No; but by their daily life; by their power to govern a household, which is often sublime; by their wisdom with children, their clever economies, their domestic graces. In these, and many other ways, they show their dominion over realms which man can not enter, except as a subject. Men see this spectacle of women, at their post of duty, all over the Christian world; and in their calm hours they bow before it.

"The next fact which they should recognize with men is this: that there are many things that men do, which the majority of women can not do, or ought not to do. Coarse out-of-door employments seem not to be for them, nor exposures on land or sea, nor the severest labors of the surgeon, the management of animals, the command of vessels, the lading of merchandise, and the heavy mechanical arts.

"It is so evident to our senses that women are molded on a different plan from men, that we must feel that any prolonged physical labor,

which has a tendency to brutalize those finer nervous powers in her, will also threaten to destroy the distinctive qualities of her soul which respond to the higher wants of man. Similarity of pursuit, in many cases, will only produce variety in the working and better self-development; but in the departments of labor which we refer to, and many others, we feel that more is lost than gained. Of course, there are exceptions to all these cases; but they do not alter the general rule." *

If this enlarged field of action were opened to woman, we believe the limitations to her capability would be only physical, or rather, perhaps, physiological. Mentally, she would probably be found to be an equal competitor with man in most of the avocations of life. For it is a gross and false piece of reasoning to infer a permanent intellectual inferiority of woman, because past social habits and incomplete education have given hitherto certain advantages to men. Give her equal opportunities for mental culture, and the stimulus of broad fields of mental activity, and she would doubtless be found capable of any employment and responsi-

* Mrs. Martha Perry Lowe.

bility, the qualifications for which are intelligence, acuteness, quickness, good taste, and good sense. For clerkships, for book-keepers, for teachers, for writers, for conductors of many branches of business, they would be the equals of men, and in some kinds of business doubtless their superiors. In literature and in some of the fine arts they are already vindicating their claim to recognition.

But in this effort at independence and self-support woman's real and permanent disabilities would be physiological, by which we mean that she is a woman; and no laws, no social habits, no opportunities, could transform her womanly nature; could change the essential elements of her constitution, by which the Creator fitted her to be not a competitor, but a helpmeet for man, and "the mother of all living." Her glory in her true nature and mission is her disability when circumstances lead her from this true destiny, and either voluntarily or involuntarily she becomes self-dependent and a competitor in the struggle for life. Physically she is weaker; physiologically she is more delicately constituted, and in her womanly nature she is more gentle, modest, sensitive than man;

and some of these she can not change, and others she has no right to lose, unless she is prepared to sacrifice her womanly nature for personal independence, or is compelled by stern necessity to crush down as much as possible her womanliness, to save herself and others from want. Physiological disabilities necessarily exclude woman from many avocations requiring strength and physical effort, and from others which would effectually destroy every element of a true womanly nature. Society, therefore, owes it to its own welfare and necessity, that no further disabilities should be laid upon them than those which arise from the permanent and essential elements of their nature. Every impediment arising out of mere social habit or prejudice should be removed out of their way; they should be furnished with every advantage which a complete education could give them, and then should be welcomed into every avocation for which they would be thus fitted, and should receive for their services in any position they could fill an equal compensation with men.

We are in this direction and thus far emphatically for "women's rights;" their right to full pay for labor, their right to enter any vocation

of life for which they deem themselves qualified, and which does not eliminate the womanly element out of them, and more than all, their right to be protected in every right and interest pertaining to their happiness and welfare. It is sheer barbarism and wanton cruelty to bar them out of some of the lucrative employments simply because they are women, and to consign them in multitudes to the overcrowded vocations of sewing, teaching, and household service.

Out of all these agitations we are confident good will come. In time, extravagances and excrescences will slough away, and what is good, and true, and wise, and just will remain. A broader life, and at the same time .a nobler womanhood, will open for the women of the future. Their own instincts will place the true boundary line between the capabilities and offices of the two different sexes. In the mean time let women take heart. They are not in captivity. The boundless future is theirs, and they will have their full share in the results of all real progress and of all true reforms. The law of service is on them as it is on man; they must bear their share of the necessary burdens and sorrows of our common human life. Much

of their service must ever consist in suffering, as most of men's consists in toil. Before both there are fields of endeavor white with beckoning harvests. In every department of charity and religion, in literature, in reforms, in ministering to the wants and woes of humanity, women have open and still opening doors set before them, which no man will desire to close. Let them enter them and work.

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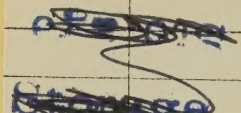

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